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OF GREAT AMERICANS

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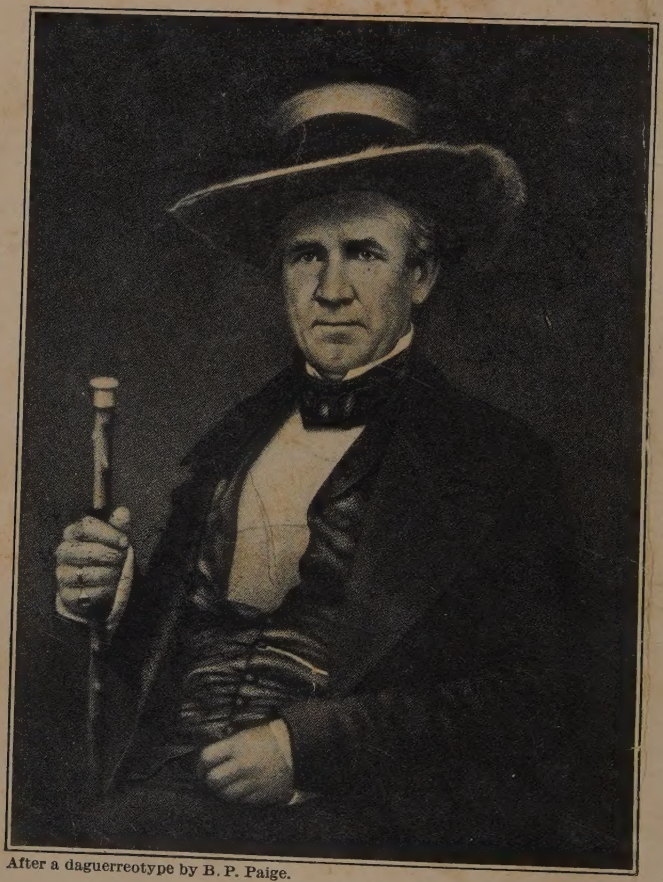

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SAM HOUSTON

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SAM HOUSTON

BY

GEORGE S. BRYAN

"By San Jacinto's placid stream
The warriors heard and, shining far,
They saw the splendid morning gleam
Of one imperial, changeless star;
They followed where its gleaming led:
To Hope, to Peace, to Victory,
For from beneath her martyr dead,
Behold, a nation rose up free!"
—M. E. M. DAVIS.

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PREFACE

CURIOUSLY enough, to Americans outside of Texas, Sam Houston is rather vague and unconvincing. He has been grouped with Carson and Custer, with Boone and Crockett; but to the general reader Sam Houston is probably less familiar than any of them.

Yet Houston was a notable personality. His life was full of adventure and romantic incident. He came to be the outstanding figure in a highly important phase of American history. He smacked of our soil and was peculiarly typical of times and conditions long passed but still of real interest.

I have sought to give a vital picture of Houston himself and to set forth as fully as necessary the events in Texas in which he played so weighty a part. I may here acknowledge my general indebtedness to the labors of Garrison, Smith, and others. For myself, the more I have studied Houston, the more I have admired him. If such be not the experience of my readers, the fault, I fear, is mine.

G. S. B.

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SAM HOUSTON

CHAPTER I

A Frontier Lad

The fine old State of Virginia has been called "the Mother of Presidents," and almost any school child can tell why. Few of us, though, happen to remember that Virginia was the mother of an active little backwoods boy who became president, not of the United States, but of a sister republic; for Texas was once an independent country, just as much as Switzerland or France, and from Virginia came its first president.

The name of the backwoods boy was Sam Houston — for though he was probably christened Samuel, he abandoned that form — and he was born on March 2, 1793, in a back section of the State, in a little spot known as Timber Ridge Church, about seven miles east of the old town of Lexington. Timber Ridge Church wasn't even a village; it was just a house or two at a cross-roads. If it had not been for Sam, we should

never have heard of it. The correct pronunciation of Houston, by the way, is as if it were spelled *Hew*ston.

Probably when you think of Virginia as it was then, you think of great, stately houses, and beautiful gardens, and elegant men and women who could give much time to all the fine graces of life because they had many negro slaves to do all the work for them. You think of rich furniture, and four-horse coaches; brocaded clothes, and wonderful balls by candlelight. This is all very pretty and romantic; but we know that Sam Houston was not born into a world like that. Those things were true of eastern Virginia, along the coast and by some of the rivers like the James. But Sam's earliest years were passed in a section of Virginia where hard-working farmers were trying in a rough way to make homes for themselves.

These people had no slaves — they did their own work, and they had plenty of work to do. They had to cut down the forest trees, to dig out and burn the stumps, to till rocky land that had never known a plow. Their houses were log cabins, their furniture was generally homemade and clumsy. When they traveled they went on horseback or on foot. Their clothing was homespun,

and the nearest thing they ever had to a ball was a rude "country dance" on the unevenest kind of a floor. It was a frontier community that Sam came into — just the sort that so many famous Americans have known as boys. But Sam thrived in those surroundings. In fact, he shot up to "six feet three" before he stopped growing, with a straight, strong figure and plenty of endurance.

His father — whose name was Samuel — didn't do so much at farming as most of the neighbors did, because he had served as a rifleman in General Daniel Morgan's brigade during the Revolutionary War, and the glamour of a soldier's life kept him in service after the war was over. He came to be a major and was assistant inspector-general of frontier troops. This means that he had to be away from home a great deal, seeing that the forces under his care were in proper shape. He died "in the harness" in 1806, while on a military tour through the Alleghanies. He was a courageous Scotch-Irishman and a good soldier.

Sam's mother had been a Miss Elizabeth Paxton. She had a strong character and a kind heart. The neighbors liked her for the many good turns she did them. After her husband died she decided to quit Virginia for the new settlements in Ten-

nessee. It wasn't an easy trip across the mountains, but somehow she reached her destination, and in Blount County, about eight miles east of the Tennessee River, another cabin was built and Sam had a second home. This was a wild country indeed — far wilder than Timber Ridge Church. The forest was everywhere. It wasn't a pleasant prospect for a widow with nine children, but somehow they got along. Of Sam's five brothers and three sisters we know almost nothing. They had no influence on him. For his mother, in spite of her almost Spartan sternness, he kept an abiding affection.

When Sam lived at Timber Ridge Church, what was known as the "Old Field School" was kept in a much-dilapidated building that had been occupied by Washington Academy. This academy was destined to be famous, for later it became Washington and Lee University, at Lexington, of which Robert E. Lee, the famous general, was at one time president. The "Field School" was an elementary affair. During the late fall and in the winter were the only times when Sam could attend with anything like regularity. The rest of the year he had his share of farm work to do. If he had a few spare minutes, he was sometimes

allowed to hurry to the school and take his place in the spelling-class. Under this highly unfavorable arrangement, Sam seems to have learned reading, writing, and the rudiments of ciphering.

He went to school, too, apparently, in Tennessee for a little while, but advantages there were even more meager than in Rockbridge County. All told, his schoolroom education could not have covered many months. Like Lincoln, however, he read what books he could get — such books as frontier folk had brought along, tucked away among farm and household effects that doubtless seemed to them more valuable and necessary.

One of these books happened to be Alexander Pope's version of the "Iliad." Critics of to-day have found much fault with Pope's translation, alleging that it is not an accurate rendering of the original text, that its language is stilted, and that it does not truly reflect the Greek spirit. However that may be, it was for many years a favorite with cultivated men; and it is interesting to find that it was eagerly read by the boy Houston in the Tennessee wilderness, on what was then the American frontier. It is said that he learned a great deal of it by heart and was fond of quoting from it. But all his life Houston's reading was limited.

We know that he read some of Shakespeare and appreciated him, as well as a few other English classics. When he was commander-in-chief of the Texan forces, he studied Cæsar's "Commentaries on the Gallic War," because he valued their austere literary style (which is not so unlike that of the "Memoirs" of our own General Grant) and the lessons in warfare that they contained. Late in life he came to read the King James version of the Bible very regularly, and reminiscences of Biblical language are to be found in many of his speeches.

The home of the Houstons in Tennessee was, as has been said, only about eight miles from the Tennessee River. The fact does not seem very important in itself; but this accidental location was to mean not a little in Houston's life.

It happened in this way. Just across that river were settled the Cherokee Indians. Do not suppose that this particular tribe was to be reckoned among the "savage red men" pictured by so many writers. The Cherokees had a written language devised by Sequoia, one of their own chiefs, and this written language was so ingenious that when the great trees of California were to be named, it was decided to call them after this clever American

chieftain. Never was a higher honor conferred on a red man; for the Sequoia groves of California are famous the world over. The characters invented by Sequoia are used by the Cherokee Indians to-day. Even in Houston's time the Cherokees were an intelligent tribe; they lived in log cabins, tilled the fields, and in a number of cases held negro slaves. It may be said that in many respects their manners and customs were not very different from those of the whites just across the river. Yet there was about them the tang of a free, forest life; and this it was, with the wish for adventure, that attracted young Sam Houston to them.

His elder brothers saw fit to place him as a clerk in a trader's store, but he had little relish for life behind a counter, and one day he disappeared. In time they learned that he had crossed the river and sought a home among the Cherokees. There he was made heartily welcome and adopted into the household of Oolooteka, one of the sub-chiefs. The name given him was Coloneh, meaning "the rover." Houston wore the Indian dress and gained a thorough command of the difficult Cherokee language. The knowledge that he acquired of Indian ways and character he made good use of

in after days as the champion and spokesman of the Indians against unjust treatment on the part of their white neighbors.

Houston was like the Indians in more ways than one. He was fond of dressing as they did, because he had the same taste for gay colors and striking effects. He was simple and brave; he was quiet and reserved and dignified; but when he wanted to speak he could speak with ease and very much to the point. His bearing was of the stately kind that we have read of — and some of us seen — in Indian chiefs. Then, too, he had a shrewd way of "sizing up" people — a trait of the Indians, though of course not peculiar to them.

He once said that he "never knew a case when a treaty was made and carried out in good faith which was violated by the Indians." A bit of his advice to white men about dealing with Indians was to be sensible, and then the Indians would follow suit. A silly prejudice gave rise to the silly remark: "The only good Indian is a dead one." Houston said: "I might have hated the Indians if I had a soul no bigger than a shellbark."

The Indians — not only the Cherokees but other tribes — were attached to Houston. In 1846, when he was a member of the United States

Senate, forty Indians from Texas were in Washington and met him. "They all ran to him," says an eyewitness, "and hugged him like bears." This was truly an unusual demonstration for Indians; and finer yet were the words of one of them, who said that Houston had been "too subtle" for them on the warpath, "too powerful in battle, too magnanimous in victory, too wise in council, and too true in faith." All his life long Houston felt that whatever his fortunes among the whites, he had, in this alien race, friends that would never fail him.

After he had left the store, Houston was sought for weeks by his family. Finally his brothers found out where he was. They argued with him and begged him to go back. Probably they valued his help in the farm work, and thought they could keep him at that, even if he wouldn't work in a store. He ended the talk by saying he "would rather measure deer tracks than tape." So they left him, quite sure, no doubt, in their own minds, that he would come to little good.

CHAPTER II

Serving with "Old Hickory"

Until he was eighteen, Houston remained with his Indian friends. He joined in the sports of the Cherokee lads, measured up with them in prowess as a hunter, and learned all the lore of the forest, though he never won the reputation of a Daniel Boone or a Davy Crockett as a crack shot and frontiersman. Before he was twenty-one he entered the army and became a disciplined soldier; then he turned to the law. Thus he accustomed himself, as Crockett and Boone never did, to a more settled and organized life. He had learned practical lessons as well, such as being resourceful under the rude and difficult conditions of the wilderness and of unsettled communities; and so by his experience and training he was remarkably well fitted for the part he was to play in the early history of Texas.

While he was living among the Cherokees, he occasionally visited the settlements for various

supplies — clothing for himself, ammunition, and trinkets for his Indian comrades. For the purchase of these things he had run a little into debt, so he decided to go back and earn enough to pay what he owed. To do this he opened a country school. His learning was limited, but he was confident enough to raise the price of tuition from six to eight dollars a year. This, however, does not seem extravagant, especially when we learn that only one-third of the sum was paid in cash. Of the remainder, one-third was paid in cotton stuffs, such as he might use for his shirts, and one-third in corn delivered at the mill at the rate of $33\frac{1}{3}$ cents a bushel. It is recorded that Houston's school was very successful, and that he was soon able to pay off his debt.

Long after, when he was a United States senator, he said to a friend: "At noon after the luncheon, which I and my pupils ate together out of our baskets, I would go out into the woods and cut me a 'sour wood' stick, trim it carefully in circular spirals, and thrust one-half of it into the fire, which would turn it blue, leaving the other half white. With this emblem of ornament and authority in my hand, dressed in a hunting-shirt of flowered calico, a long queue down my back,

and the sense of authority over my pupils, I experienced a higher feeling of dignity and self-satisfaction than from any office or honor which I have since held." Houston had humor enough to appreciate the funny side of this experience. It is also interesting to note that he was one of the many distinguished Americans — such as Lincoln and Garfield, for example — who at some time in their careers "taught school."

Sam attended an academy at Maryville for a term or two, and then his formal "education" was completed. What we call the War of 1812 was in progress. A recruiting squad came to quiet Maryville in 1813, when Sam was twenty. There were bugles and banners and trim sergeants in their tidy uniforms, which, in those days, when service clothes and equipment were showier than they are to-day, must have brought a real breath of adventure and romance to backwoods boys in their homespuns. That Houston would be among the first to enlist might easily be foreseen.

He was well thought of among his neighbors, and even then it was predicted that he was marked out for a "career." People had said he would die in a madhouse, or be a great Indian chief, or become governor of the State. The last of these

was to be true, but it did not seem so when he stepped forward and took a big silver dollar from a drum head (a sign of enlistment) and entered the ranks. His friends wanted nothing less than a commission for him and were outspoken in complaint. Houston curtly retorted, "I would much sooner honor the ranks than disgrace an appointment. You don't know me now, but you shall hear of me." He seems always to have had a certain belief in his future, and sometimes he expressed it in this rather direct manner.

On the very day he enlisted he was made a sergeant, and away he went, with admonitions from his good mother, to join his regiment, the Seventh Infantry. He was stationed at various encampments in Alabama and Tennessee, and won the name of being the best drillmaster in the whole command. Although he did not see active service against Great Britain, he did not long remain in the ranks. His friends brought influence to bear on President Madison, and while his regiment was quartered at Knoxville, Houston received a commission as ensign in the Thirty-ninth Infantry. On December 31, 1813, he was commissioned third lieutenant.

He was now to meet one of the outstanding

figures in American history, and to make a friendship that should affect his whole future. Down in Alabama the Creek Indians, originally a powerful tribe, were being shouldered out of their homes and lands by the unceasing aggression of the whites. It was the old story of injustice on the one side and fierce resentment on the other, that has so often been told during the occupation and development of this country by white men.

The Creeks, following the Indian mode of warfare, made a fierce attack upon the settlements, and on August 10, 1813, a wholesale massacre of the whites took place at Fort Mims, Alabama. In retaliation, the Indian country was invaded by troops under command of General John Coffee and, more especially, of General Andrew Jackson. The Creeks, however, were not easily to be subdued. The fighting remnant of the tribe, some 700 warriors, with 300 women and children, gathered at Tohopeka, or Horseshoe Bend, on the Tallapoosa River in Alabama. Here the river made a great serpentine twist; and the Indians built log breastworks across the neck of the peninsula that jutted into the sluggish waters.

On March 27, 1814, General Jackson arrived at the spot with 2000 men, one of whom was

Lieutenant Sam Houston. An examination of the Indian position revealed on the land side an approach some three hundred and fifty yards wide, fortified, with a skill rare among Indians, by a triple row of thick pine logs set vertically and zigzagged like the breastworks of military engineers. For the remainder of its extent the peninsula was surrounded by high banks, and the river was too deep to be forded. The area held by the Indians was about 100 acres, most of it covered with trees and undergrowth.

The battle began at about ten in the morning. Jackson had two little fieldpieces which made absolutely no impression on the Indian fortifications. There were some Cherokee allies with Jackson, and a number of these swam the river and managed to get back with the canoes that the Creeks had secreted among the bushes along the shore. In these canoes troops crossed to attack the Creeks from the rear at the same time that a terrific charge was being made upon the fortifications in front.

The attacking force swarmed over the palisade, and then followed a hand-to-hand fight in which no quarter was given or asked. When the first rush was made, Houston was well in front of the

extreme right of the line. Just as he reached the top of the palisade, an arrow pierced deeply into his side. He called to another lieutenant to draw out the arrow. The lieutenant failed twice. "Try again," Houston shouted at him, "and if you fail this time, I will smite you to the earth." Needless to say, the lieutenant, using his utmost strength, tore out the arrow, leaving a jagged wound from which poured a stream of blood.

Houston went to the rear to have his wound dressed, and while he was being attended by the surgeon, Jackson, who had been watching the fight from horseback, caught sight of him. Riding up, Jackson ordered him not to return. He disobeyed orders, however, and when Jackson called for volunteers to storm a ravine in which a few warriors had found refuge, among a few daring fellows who answered, there was Houston, the wounded lieutenant! He shouted to his men to follow and plunged forward. He had not gone far when two bullets shattered the upper part of his right arm, and he staggered back out of range. No one had followed him, but he had won the admiration of Andrew Jackson. From that time Jackson's confidence in Houston never wavered. As he went onward to the Presidency he was al-

ways Houston's patron; and Houston on his part was Jackson's stanch supporter, in politics and out.

For two months Houston was moved from one post to another, with no proper surgical attendance. At last, carried on a horse-litter, he reached his mother's cabin. In great pain as he was, worn by his wounds, and emaciated through lack of suitable food, he was thought almost beyond recovery. His mother said she would not have recognized him had it not been for his eyes, which still held something of their old-time alert expression.

We may be sure that Houston, even when fighting with such valor, never abandoned his fundamental belief that in troubles with the Indians the whites were almost invariably the aggressors. He had entered the army, however, for such duty as might fall to him, even though that duty might be distasteful; and he was bound to do his best under the immediate command of Jackson, the popular military leader of those days.

Despite his mother's care, Sam did not get better, so he was taken to Maryville and then to Knoxville, where he finally obtained a surgeon under whose charge he slowly improved. In time he was able to make a horseback journey to

Washington, reaching there just after it had been raided by the British and the Capitol burned. Not yet strong enough to report for active duty, he passed the winter at Lexington, Virginia, and then went again to Tennessee.

A letter of his has come to light, written in the spring of 1815 from the little town of Dandridge, in Jefferson County, Tennessee. At that time he evidently thought he would be retired from the army; and he speaks of seeking his fortune in Knoxville, remarking that "if I come no better speed than I have done heretofore, it will be some time."

Jackson had won his great victory at New Orleans on January 8, 1815. Peace had already been concluded with the United States commissioners at Ghent, in Belgium; but it sometimes took as much as six weeks for even fast sailing-vessels to cross the Atlantic, so that the news of the peace did not reach this country until several weeks after the battle. In his letter Houston says, ". . . People here are much gratified at the restoration of peace," and adds, ". . . As relates to me, I would not want peace if I did not believe it was promoting the happiness of the community at large. . . ."

Houston was not retired, however, but instead was promoted to a second lieutenancy for his bravery at Horseshoe Bend. He was assigned to the First Infantry, May 17, 1815, and shortly was ordered from camp at Knoxville to duty at New Orleans. In a skiff with two other young men — one of whom was E. D. White, afterward governor of Louisiana — he voyaged down the Cumberland and the Mississippi to Natchez.

As they approached Natchez they saw far down the river what seemed to be a large boat on fire. It turned out that the columns of smoke they had seen were from one of the first steamboats to make successful trips up the Mississippi. They abandoned their skiff at Natchez and enjoyed the amazing experience of a ride to New Orleans on board a real steamer.

At New Orleans Houston had his wound operated on again, nearly at the expense of his life. In April he went to New York for further treatment, and then was assigned to the office of the adjutant-general of the Southern Division at Nashville. This wound of his never entirely healed and always gave him more or less trouble.

CHAPTER III

Early Public Life

Houston was not to continue much longer in the army. Until November, 1817, he was employed in the office at Nashville, doing the routine work that fell to him. Then he was appointed a sub-agent of the United States among the Cherokees. Jackson recommended him very highly for the post, and it must have been quite to Houston's liking, for it brought him again among his Indian friends. His long acquaintance with them, and his knowledge of their language and their affairs, soon made him of great service.

In 1816 the various tribal chiefs had been prevailed on to sign a treaty by the terms of which they surrendered title to a large tract of their choicest and most desirable lands in eastern Tennessee. Many members of the tribe rebelled at this and refused to leave their homes and hunting-grounds, treaty or no treaty. This problem was

turned over to Houston as the one best qualified to adjust matters.

He went up to Washington with a delegation of the Indians, there to arrange the boundaries of the Cherokee reservation and to obtain payment for the land that had been sold. He finally made a peaceable settlement, and his immediate superiors thanked him for what he had done, but he got himself into trouble with the secretary of war, John C. Calhoun. It was all about a question of official etiquette. As spokesman for the Cherokees, Houston wore to Washington the Indian garb that he was accustomed to wear when among them. He was always rather fond of the picturesque in his dress, and, besides, he liked to identify himself with his protégés in this way.

When he appeared thus before Calhoun, however, the secretary stood quite on ceremony and reprimanded him in a manner that Houston greatly resented. Very likely the secretary was right — Houston should have come in uniform; but Houston was much offended, and the trouble was to be carried further.

The Indian country was a kind of no-man's land for all sorts of white ruffians and hard characters — men continually busy with lawless plans.

Florida was still a Spanish province, and a group of these freebooters were making a practice of smuggling slaves from Florida through the Indian country to the adjacent settlements. Houston stepped in to break up this slave trade, and, through friends at Washington, those engaged in it tried to injure him by bringing against him false charges of misconduct in office.

Any such charges were without foundation and absurd on the face of them, and Houston was abundantly able to clear himself before Calhoun and President Madison. Calhoun, however, chose to conduct the official inquiry in a rather unfriendly manner, and this further angered Houston, who, when he had returned with the delegation, resigned from the army, March 1, 1818.

He had served for nearly five years. He had risen from the ranks to be first lieutenant, and distinguished himself for gallantry, had won the regard of his superiors, and had gained the confidence of "Old Hickory," like himself a man of the frontier. That he possessed a high degree of military talent was not to be shown until a later period of his life.

He now made up his mind to study law. There was then in the United States only one law school of any consequence — that of Judge Reeve, in a

primitive little building in the famous old town of Litchfield, Connecticut. Calhoun had been a pupil of Reeve's. Young men who wished to be admitted to the bar, however, usually studied by themselves or in the office of some established attorney. In Houston's part of the country a lawyer was expected to go into politics — "the law" was simply a preliminary to running for some office. The lawyers jogged about on horseback on their circuits from one session of court to another, with a law book or two in their saddlebags and a pistol under their coats. When court was held, half of the countryside would flock in, for it was a great diversion to hear the flights of oratory and listen to the combats of wit between opposing counsel. There were bustle and stir in the taverns, and the whole affair was rather a gala day for the community.

Houston studied for six months in the office of Hon. James Trimble at Nashville and then was easily admitted to practice. He never claimed to be a well-equipped lawyer, but he was quite able to hold his own among his associates, most of whom had had a training no more thorough than his own. In the pleadings of such men there was usually more native eloquence of a flamboyant

sort than profound knowledge of textbooks and precedents. Houston was a ready and convincing speaker, with plenty of common sense, and though he started in debt and had to buy his small office library on credit, he did well from the first in his new profession.

In the little town of Lebanon, Tennessee, where he "hung out his shingle," he had a good friend in Isaac Golladay, storekeeper and postmaster, who trusted him for his clothing, rented him an office for twelve dollars a year, and paid the postage on his letters. In those days letter-postage was twenty-five cents, and was paid by the person who received the letter. Houston was like the Indians in another respect — he never forgot a kindness. In 1853, when Frederick Golladay, a son of Isaac, was taken sick while traveling in Texas, he was carried to the Houston home and there nursed back to health, Houston himself spending much time in the sick-room, making Golladay comfortable and beguiling the hours with entertaining stories of his adventurous life.

Houston had his eye on politics, and he was not long in becoming locally prominent. To begin with, Andrew Jackson was Houston's patron, and Jackson held Tennessee politically in the hollow

of his hand. But there was more than that. Houston could amuse a knot of listeners in a country store by his yarns; he could impress men and lead them by his natural dignity and his gift for speech-making. Though of pronounced opinions, he was at the same time always broad minded and adaptable. So it came about that in the same year, 1819, he was appointed adjutant-general of Tennessee, with rank of colonel — an office that was more political than military — and also district attorney for the Davidson district, with residence at Nashville.

He made a very acceptable district attorney but soon found that the fees were too small for him to live on, and at the end of the year he returned to private practice. In 1821 he was elected major-general of the Tennessee militia, and in 1823 he was fairly started on his larger political career. In that year, at the age of thirty, he was elected a representative in Congress from the ninth Tennessee district.

Jackson gave him a glowing letter of introduction to the veteran Jefferson, who was then living in honored retirement at his fine estate of Monticello, near Charlottesville, Virginia. The letter spoke of Houston as "a particular friend of mine,"

and added: "He has attained his present standing without the extrinsic advantages of fortune or education, and has sustained, in his various promotions from the common soldier to the major-general, the character of the high-minded and honorable man." The meeting with Jefferson must have been inspiring to such an ardent young Democrat as Houston; and we may suppose, too, that the aging statesman was glad to meet a young man of whom Jackson could write such praise.

Houston was in the House for four years — two terms. There were giants in Congress in those days. The young representative from a newly apportioned district of Tennessee was in the company of such men as the venerable Nathaniel Macon; John Randolph of Roanoke, the veteran of the House, boasting his descent from Pocahontas; James K. Polk; the scholarly and polished Edward Everett; dashing Henry Clay; and, ablest of them all, Daniel Webster, with his leonine head and classic periods. Nor must we forget Jackson, who was elected a United States senator not long after Houston's election as representative, and who served with Houston as a member of the committee on military affairs.

Of course Houston was a strong partisan of the

Jacksonian wing of the Democratic party. He took part in some of the debates, and he studied the able legislators about him. All the while, he was quietly getting a grasp of the principles of statecraft and an understanding of big national questions. He was rapidly becoming a versatile and ready man, but at the same time he lost none of his own strong individuality. Petty political tricks were always beneath him. Party feeling was strong in those young days of our country, and that feeling frequently expressed itself in personal animosity and abuse to an extent that we to-day should think very ungenerous and foolish. Houston had a rather vigorous temper, and when he got into a dispute he was likely to lay about him with a right good will. Particularly was he sensitive in regard to anything that appeared to affect his personal honor, public or private. But he was no hand to connive or bargain or drive the small politician's trade.

It was quite natural that he should be a sturdy adherent of Jackson. There were the personal reasons that have already been stated, and there were other reasons in the similar temperaments of the two and their general agreement on public questions. They were from the same part of the

country, they had a history in many ways similar, and they both believed very honestly in the Democratic principles of Jefferson.

Houston left Congress without having won any special reputation in debate, perhaps a little to the disappointment of his supporters in Tennessee, who believed him to be an effective orator. He had, indeed, as we have seen, a gift for public address. When he was leaving Lebanon for Nashville, to enter on his duties as district attorney, he gave his farewell address so movingly, it is said, that all who heard him were in tears. From that day until, at the age of seventy, he bade good-by to his fellow-citizens in the city named after him, Houston could always make a telling speech. His oratory was touched with the fashion of the times; it was often "flowery," but it was also instinct with common sense and sometimes lightened by a lively humor. Houston could sway an audience of the frontier type — the audience that he best understood — with unerring skill. It was said of him that two things could bring out Texas folks in crowds — the circus and Sam Houston! Perhaps this association is unfortunate, for Houston never forgot his dignity and never appealed to the mob spirit.

In 1824 Jackson was a candidate for the presidency, the other candidates being John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, and William H. Crawford of Georgia, who had been minister to France and secretary of war and of the treasury. The electoral vote finally stood as follows: Jackson, 99; Adams, 84; Crawford, 41; Clay, 37. No one, therefore, had a majority. The House of Representatives elected Adams, and Jackson returned to private life. Four years later he was elected President by a decisive majority over Adams.

After the election of 1824, a party slander was started by the statement that Clay had been induced to throw his support to Adams by the promise of being made secretary of state. John Randolph, who could be as bitter as he was eccentric, spoke of Adams's association with Clay as "a combination of the Puritan with the blackleg." There was no foundation for the story, but it did Clay much harm. The truth of the matter was simply that, as he stood fourth on the list of electoral votes, Clay could not be considered by the House of Representatives; and he then gave his personal support to Adams.

Clay offered a resolution for an inquiry into his conduct. This resolution was opposed by the

Jackson men, including Houston, who sent to his constituency an address explaining his reason for the position he took. If Clay had a personal grievance, he said, he ought to take it to the courts; any inquiry by Congress was sure to be conducted as a purely political matter and would amount to nothing. Houston's address was well written — at once strong and dignified. Somehow the frontier boy had acquired a literary style which, if a bit cumbersome for our modern taste, was nevertheless clear, correct, and finished.

Some have thought that there was another motive in the address — that it was intended to gain further popular support for Jackson. Many had held that, as Jackson had a plurality of electoral votes, it was he who should have been chosen President. However that may be, the tide of Jackson's popularity was swelling to the flood. He defeated Adams in 1828 by the surprising vote of 178 to 83, and in 1832 was triumphantly re-elected. The country had never known a leader like him. It is possible that Houston may have considered the address a legitimate means of aiding a man he so intensely admired.

While Houston was serving in Congress, during his second term, he fought a duel with a man who

challenged him. In a speech to his friends afterwards, he said that on principle he was opposed to duelling, but that on this occasion he had felt obliged to defend his honor.

We must remember that in his day a duel was a frequent, although foolish, way of settling a "gentleman's quarrel." The whole nation had been shocked by the affair between two of its most brilliant men, Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr. Hamilton, at the age of forty-seven, had fallen and left his great constructive work unfinished. Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College, denounced duelling in a celebrated sermon from Proverbs xxviii. 17: "A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him." Anti-duelling societies were formed. But duelling continued, especially in the South and Southwest. Only a few years before Houston accepted the challenge sent him, an encounter had taken place at Bladensburg, Maryland, between Commodore Decatur and Commodore Barron, with Decatur as the sacrifice.

In Houston's day no such thing as civil service reform had been heard of, and there was a host of offices of every sort to be doled out by each ad-

ministration as it came into power. Appointments were only too often made on the basis of party services or party favoritism, rather than on that of merit or of special fitness. "To the victor belong the spoils," was the general idea of all parties.

Houston did not think much of a certain Colonel Irwin, who was made postmaster at Nashville by the Adams administration. He said his say regarding the Colonel, and emphatic language seems to have been bandied about rather freely. Two more colonels and a general got mixed up in the discussion. Colonel Irwin picked Colonel John T. Smith to convey a challenge to Houston by way of Colonel MacGregor, one of Houston's friends. MacGregor had his opinion of Smith — who was, we are told, a species of border ruffian — and when Smith handed him the challenge in front of the Nashville Inn, he let the paper flutter to the ground.

Strange to say, no fight followed between the two colonels, and news was taken to Houston, then stopping at the Inn, of what had occurred outside. A certain General William White was among the group around Houston, and he stirred Houston's ire by remarking that he didn't think such treatment fair to Smith.

"If you, sir, have any grievance," said Houston

to White, "I will give you any satisfaction you may demand."

"I have nothing to do with your difficulty," answered White, "but I presume you know what is due from one gentleman to another." That was all then; but the report came to the General that Nashville thought Houston had cowed him; and feeling his courage assailed, he dispatched a challenge to Houston on his own account. Houston at once accepted.

The duel was fought at sunrise, September 23, 1826, at a spot known by the curious name of Linkumpinch, just across the line in Kentucky. As he took his place, Houston stuck a bullet into his mouth, Jackson having told him that something to bite on would make his aim steadier. His aim, at all events, was steady enough, for he shot White through the hip. He himself escaped without a scratch.

Houston and White had both evaded arrest in Tennessee, and in the following June, the grand jury of Simpson County, Kentucky, returned an indictment against Houston for having shot at William White with intent to kill. The governor of Kentucky forthwith demanded Houston's surrender, but the governor of Tennessee replied that

investigation showed Houston had only acted in self-defense, and that therefore he would not be surrendered. Even if it had come to a trial for felony, we may be sure that no jury in those parts would have dreamed of finding Houston guilty.

"Thank God," Houston exclaimed, "that my antagonist was injured no worse!" White recovered, and Houston's popularity was, if possible, greater than ever.

The same year — 1827 — in which Houston was indicted by a Kentucky grand jury, he was elected governor of his own State of Tennessee. The other candidates were Newton Cannon and Willie Blount, who was then sixty years of age and was called "the war governor" because he had held office during the War of 1812. Houston's majority was 12,000. The vote cast for Blount was surprisingly small. Cannon had little chance because he was not so eager for Jackson as Tennessee thought he ought to be. Houston was a few months over thirty-four at the time of the election, August 2, 1827.

There was a little boy who saw him on that day — saw him as a hero of boyish fancy, and never forgot how he looked. He has left us this description of Houston's striking costume:

"He wore on that day . . . a tall, bell-crowned, medium-brimmed, shining black beaver hat, shining black patent-leather military stock or cravat, incased by a standing collar, ruffled shirt, black satin vest, shining black silk pants gathered to the waistband with legs full, . . . and a gorgeous, red-ground, many-colored gown or Indian hunting-shirt, fastened at the waist by a huge red sash covered with fancy bead-work, with an immense silver buckle, embroidered silk stockings, and pumps with large silver buckles."

So Colonel Claiborne, when living at Goliad in Texas, described the glittering figure he had beheld on an elegant dapple-gray horse, that faraway August election day. When among the people whom he knew and who knew and idolized him, Houston liked to disregard the conventions of attire and indulge in such a color display. The same fondness has been true of many a cowboy or plainsman or scout, but perhaps no other man in modern public life, except possibly Lord Beaconsfield, has ever equaled Houston in this respect.

But however unconventional he may have been in his dress, Houston made an excellent governor. His administration was highly successful and served to confirm the general impression of his sound

sense and his ability as a statesman. In due course he was renominated. Favorite of the all-powerful Jackson, governor of his State, popular among all classes, he seemed in a fair way to achieve the presidency. A president he was indeed destined to become, but not of the United States. Domestic trouble occurred that seemed likely to blast his whole political future.

We shall never know the details, nor the full right and wrong of it, but here is the gist of what we do know. In January, 1829, he married Miss Eliza Allen, who came of a prominent family in Sumner County. After three months his wife returned to her father's home, and although Houston wrote, asking the father to intercede in his behalf, she refused to go back to her husband. Houston was always silent on the matter, even when questioned by curious or ill-bred persons. He once wrote, "Eliza stands acquitted by me," and further than that he would not go.

He at once addressed to General William Hall, speaker of the senate of Tennessee, a letter of resignation as governor that deserves to be quoted here in full because many of its expressions so well illustrate his character. He wrote as follows: —

"*Sir:* It has become my duty to resign the office of chief magistrate of the State, and to place in your hand the authority and responsibility which on such an event devolves on you by the provisions of the constitution. In dissolving the political connection which has so long and in such a variety of forms existed between the people of Tennessee and myself, no private affliction can forbid an expression of the grateful recollections so eminently due to the kind partialities of an indulgent public. From my earliest youth, whatever of talent was committed to my care, has been honestly cultivated and expended for the common good; and at no period of a life which has certainly been marked by a full portion of interesting events, have any views of private interest or private ambition been permitted to mingle in the higher duties of public trust. In reviewing the past I can only regret that my capacity for being useful was so unequal to the devotion of my heart, and it is one of the few consolations of my life that even had I been blessed with ability equal to my zeal, my country's generous support in every vicissitude of life has been more than equal to them both. That veneration for public opinion by which I have measured every act of my official life, has

taught me to hold no delegated power which would not daily be renewed by my constituents, could the choice be daily submitted to a sensible expression of their will. And although shielded by a perfect consciousness of undiminished claim to the confidence and support of my fellow-citizens, and delicately circumstanced as I am and by my own misfortunes more than the fault or contrivance of any one, overwhelmed by sudden calamities, it is certainly due to myself and more respectful to the world, that I retire from a position which, in the public judgment, I might seem to occupy by questionable authority. It yields me no small share of comfort, so far as I am capable of taking comfort from any circumstance, that in resigning my executive charge, I am placing it in the hands of one whose integrity and worth have long been tried; who understands and will pursue the true interests of the State; and who, in the hour of success and in the hour of adversity, has been the consistent and valued friend of the great and good man now enjoying the triumph of his virtues in the conscious security of a nation's gratitude.

Sam Houston."

By "the great and good man" he of course means Jackson.

After reading this letter, one feels like exclaiming, "There speaks a man!" His idea of conduct in public office is expressed with singular skill, and may be commended to every holder of an elective office in this or any other democracy. In what he says about holding "no delegated power which would not daily be renewed by my constituents," he anticipates in a very interesting way the idea of the "recall," which has in our own time been agitated in American politics. The basis of that idea is that it should be possible for the people to vote to retire a public official before his term expires, if he acts contrary to promises made when he was elected or fails to carry out the popular will.

The whole document shows the heart of the man speaking out under stress with an honesty and a frankness that at once carry conviction. All in all, for literary style and for its declaration of high ideals, it may safely be set down as a remarkable production.

Houston's resignation was followed by a general uproar all over the State. Nothing was now too bad for some people to say of the man who but a few short months before had been so generally admired. Houston quietly left Nashville. His

wife obtained a divorce on the ground of abandonment, married a Dr. Douglass, lived for some years at Gallatin, Tennessee, and was as reticent as Houston regarding the separation. Both treated it as a private matter, and we may very properly follow their example.

CHAPTER IV

Living with Indians

When Houston decided that it was best for him to leave the State among whose hills he had spent happy years — the State in which he had been so successful and whose people he had tried so faithfully to serve — he turned to the Indians among whom he had once before found shelter. He knew they wouldn't care two straws what white enemies might be saying of him, and would only be glad to welcome him back.

Oolooteka was still alive, sixty or more now, grown portlier and a little gray. He did not live among the main body of the tribe any longer, but had gone out to the Arkansas River with a band of Cherokees who had left their old haunts. The warlike Osages did not want these strange Indians in their territory, but the government finally adjusted the difficulty, and the Cherokees had their main settlement where the Illinois flows into

the Arkansas. Oolooteka was of more importance than before. Back east he was only a sub-chief, but now the western Cherokees made him their big chief, and he lived almost like the patriarchs that we read of in the Old Testament.

Twelve negro slaves were his, and he had a great herd of five hundred cattle. His dwelling stood in a clearing under the sycamores and cottonwood trees, and its doors swung open to Coloneh, the Rover. Perhaps, if you had chanced that way, you might have seen the chief and Sam Houston, seated by each other on the floor, helping themselves from the great trencher of coarse hominy, and talking eagerly of all that had happened since last they met. "Rest with us," invited Oolooteka. That night, when he wrapped himself in his blanket and lay down to rest, the wanderer felt more cheered than he had in many a day.

Houston remained among the Indians for nearly three years. Quickly he slipped back into Indian dress and Indian ways. It would have been difficult even to recognize him, for he let his hair grow long and wore it in a queue down his back, a style that he thought rather becoming when he was a backwoods school-teacher; his chin was now covered with a beard. He must have made a

brave sight when he was in full ceremonial dress, ready to join in the general council. He then wore elaborately beaded moccasins, yellow leggings, an embroidered white hunting-shirt, a red blanket, and a headdress of turkey feathers.

The general council was a kind of powwow in which all matters of importance were decided by vote. This differed from the way the Cherokees governed themselves in their eastern reservation, where they had a constitution and a system of laws like the white man. As a member of Oolooteka's household, and a general favorite, Houston could not fail to have standing in these conferences. He was wise enough, though, being after all a white man and an outsider, not to attempt to take a leading part.

On his way westward he had sent a note of farewell to President Jackson. Jackson replied with words of sympathy and also alluded to a report which he said had come to him that Houston was thinking of invading Texas with an Indian force and setting up an empire there. Texas was then a part of Mexico, which in 1821 had declared its independence of Spain. With his usual trust in his well-tried friend, Jackson wrote, "I cannot believe you have any such chimerical, visionary

scheme in view." Indeed, Houston had not. He was to make himself famous in Texas in due time, but not in that way.

Although he chose to take only a modest part in the Cherokee council, Houston was all the while active for the welfare of the Indians. From Mrs. Helen Hunt Jackson's story "Ramona," we learn how the Indians of the Far West were so often defrauded of their lands. The same kind of thing was true in the Middle West in Houston's time. Here is a specimen of it.

There was an Indian Bureau at Washington in charge of a man named McKenney, who was not very watchful to see that his agents did the square thing by their Indian wards. The agents and the contractors who took jobs for furnishing supplies to the Indians generally swindled them if they had a fair chance. These agents managed to wheedle out of the Cherokees a desirable tract of land on the lower Arkansas. Each Indian voter was to get twenty-eight dollars as payment. This was small business enough, but even this was not done. The agents gave the Indians certificates, and when these certificates were presented, they were redeemed not in cash but in articles of trifling value — such as bottles of poor whisky and cheap blankets.

Such rascally work made Houston's blood boil. In 1830 he started off to Washington with a few of the Indians and there he spoke his mind to such good effect, and proved his case so thoroughly, that five of the agents were promptly dismissed. The "Indian ring" naturally didn't enjoy having its questionable methods made known, so when Houston applied for the contract to furnish food supplies to the Indians that were about to be sent west of the Mississippi, the contractors fought him bitterly.

Sam Houston put in a bid of eighteen cents a day per person for supplying the rations. Jackson was inclined to let the contract go to him, but McKenney, whose ideas as to food for the Indians were probably not so liberal as Houston's, said it ought to, and could, be done for seven cents a day. Some contractors had a way of putting in a low bid and then furnishing to the Indians stuff that was actually not fit to eat. A person called General Duff Green — a name that seems to come right out of "Martin Chuzzlewit" — succeeded in influencing Jackson so far that Houston failed to obtain the contract. Even so, unscrupulous newspapers made a good deal of the incident. As a matter of fact, there is not in Houston's whole

life one thing to show that he was ever dishonest or even greedy. On the contrary, in Texas he had many a chance to use his position to get wealth for himself, and he put them all aside. He was not a man who would seek to cheat the Indians. They were his friends. The untruths that were spread regarding him touched him on a vital point — his personal integrity and honor. He felt the gross injustice of them, and at last his feelings carried him too far.

In the spring of 1832 he was again in Washington. The Honorable William Stanberry, a representative from Ohio, while taking part in a certain debate, made a wholesale attack on Jackson's administration. Among other things he raked up the Indian contract: "Was not the late secretary of war (General Eaton) removed," he asked, "because of his attempt fraudulently to give to Governor Houston the contract for Indian rations?" A great deal of nonsense is uttered in public by men who should know better. The Honorable William Stanberry was uttering nonsense.

It is to be regretted that Houston paid any attention to it; but at the outset he was at least courteous and not overhasty. He wrote a letter

asking if the remark quoted had been made. This letter he sent to Stanberry by the hand of Cave Johnson of Tennessee. Stanberry replied, not to Houston but to Johnson. His manner was insulting. He stated that he had received from Johnson, a letter signed by one Sam Houston (as if Houston were some one unworthy of his notice), but that he really could not admit that this Houston had any right to the information asked.

Houston was angry clear through. "I'll introduce myself," said he, and he made no secret of his intention to thrash the Honorable William Stanberry on sight. Years before, he had cut a hickory stick on the grounds of "The Hermitage," Jackson's home in Tennessee. This stick he had carried for a while and then given to a friend in Georgetown, near Washington. He now got it back and carried it with him whenever he went out. The Honorable William Stanberry was well aware of what was brewing, and armed himself with a pistol. Houston must have known that if he attacked a Member of Congress because of words that had been spoken in the course of debate, it would be considered what was known as a breach of legislative privilege.

One evening he was walking along Pennsylvania

Avenue in company with Representative Blair of Tennessee and Senator Buckner of Missouri, when Stanberry crossed the avenue and came face to face with them. Blair walked quickly away. "Are you Mr. Stanberry?" asked Houston. No sooner had Stanberry answered than Houston struck at him with the hickory cane. Buckner, who stood by, afterwards gave a full account of what happened. On this we need not dwell. Sufficient to say that Stanberry drew his pistol, but the old-fashioned lock snapped without discharging the weapon. Houston wrenched the pistol from Stanberry, chastised him severely, and then walked on.

Stanberry wrote to the speaker of the House, claiming a breach of privilege. Houston was arrested and brought to the bar of the House. He selected as his counsel Francis Scott Key, so well known as the author of the splendid words of our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." The trial dragged on for a month. Key's argument was that "legislative privilege" could be held to protect a member of Congress only while he was, so to speak, on duty. Houston himself made a speech in his own defense. He had attacked Stanberry, he said, not for words spoken

in Congressional debate, but because of their publication to all the world in the columns of the *National Intelligencer*, a Washington newspaper, and because Stanberry had refused to answer his note. Furthermore, he said, when a member "brands a private citizen as a fraudulent villain," he forfeits any privilege.

He was deeply moved, and parts of his speech, even to-day, ring out from the printed page so eloquently we feel sure that, aided by Houston's commanding personality, they must have made a strong impression. Some persons had referred to his resignation from the governorship and his departure from the State. "I have only to say to those who rebuke me at this time, when they see adversity pressing upon me, for myself,

> 'I ask no sympathy nor need;
> The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree
> I planted. They have torn me, and I bleed.'"

Thus he spoke, and it was finely said. And again: "If, when deeply wronged, I have followed the generous impulses of my heart, have violated the laws of my country and the privileges of this honorable body, I am willing to be held to my responsibility for so doing."

It was finally voted that he be reprimanded by

the Speaker. This was done in a perfunctory way. President Jackson supported Houston all through. "After a few more examples of the kind," he is reported to have said, "members of Congress will learn to keep civil tongues in their heads." General sentiment was with Houston, too. Even though their own privilege of speaking in debate had been violated, the members of the House voted merely to reprimand him, and then by a ballot of only 106 to 89.

It was a mistake on Houston's part, but it was in accord with the traditions and practices of the frontier on which he had grown to manhood; and those were days when that kind of personal violence was not frowned upon, as it would be now, by public opinion. Then, too, we must remember that he was naturally of a high temper and that this temper had been set on edge by his personal misfortunes and his sensitiveness to what enemies said concerning him. As Sam Houston lived, he grew. Afterwards, in Texas, he received a challenge from a man with no further comment than to tell his secretary to file it as "challenge 14" and pleasantly ask the gentleman to be so good as to wait his turn. A sermon from the words, "Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that

taketh a city," was the direct means of setting him thinking about religious matters. He knew his faults, and he tried to mend them.

This may be shown by another instance. Although he remained with the Cherokees, he left Oolooteka's roof and built a cabin on the west bank of the Neosho, or Grand, River, near where that river enters the Arkansas, almost across from the army post of Fort Gibson. He raised a few head of stock, farmed a little, and kept a small trader's store. He refused to sell liquor to the Indians, but to relieve the melancholy into which he now so often sank, he himself sometimes resorted to drink. We mention this because some writers have been inclined to enlarge upon it. This fault, also, he conquered, like the strong man he was.

When the time came for him to go to Texas, to play the leading part in the great drama there unfolding, he was ready. He had been waiting for some task large enough to arouse his whole interest and claim his lagging energies.

CHAPTER V

An Excursion into History

Before going with Houston to Texas, let us consider the exact condition of things there. Otherwise, the events in which he became so prominent may not be quite clear. It is a rather involved story at first, because Mexican politics have so much to do with it, and Mexican politics were, to say the least, very confused. We must therefore limit ourselves, so far as possible, to what is really necessary in order to follow the life-story of Sam Houston. By what he did in Texas he put his enemies to silence and took his place among the builders of states.

Let us go back a little, and get a glimpse of the internal affairs of Mexico. In her rule of Mexico, Spain had been quite as unwise as she usually was in her other colonies; and finally, in 1810, the Mexican dislike of Spain, long smoldering, took fire. The struggle was not easy for the revolu-

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STATUE OF HOUSTON IN STATUARY HALL OF THE CAPITOL, WASHINGTON

The sculptor was Elizabet Ney, of Texas. This represents Houston as the artist supposed him to have looked in his youth.

tionists, and it dragged on for several years. The popular leader, Agustin de Iturbide, happened, however, to be a man of good ability, and at last, in September, 1821, he triumphantly entered Mexico City and the country was declared to be free. Spain did not recognize Mexican independence until April 28, 1835, and in 1829 sent a feeble expedition to win back, if possible, what she had lost. The Mexicans, however, paid no attention to Spain, but proceeded to prove that they could govern themselves almost as badly as Spain had ever governed them.

Iturbide should have set himself the task of developing a republic, for that of course had been the original object of the revolt. He seems to have wanted his country to prosper, but his ideas of prosperity were centered almost wholly in himself. Unfortunately, most Mexican "patriots" were like that. Aided by a part of the army he had led, Iturbide succeeded in having himself proclaimed the Most Serene Agustin I., Emperor of Mexico. This was rank usurpation of power, and nothing else, and there was distinct opposition to it. Iturbide brushed aside opposition, however, and the Mexican congress voted to confirm him in his title. He was more interested in mustering

an idle pomp and ceremony for his "coronation" than he was in setting about the improvement of his country.

We now come to a man whose name is more familiar to American readers, because he commanded against Taylor and Scott in the Mexican War. Although he never won a battle against our troops, he was the best soldier in Mexico. From the age of fifteen he had been in the army, and in 1823 we find him Iturbide's right-hand man. Then he headed an insurrection, the outcome of which was that in 1824 Agustin I. surrendered his throne, a constitution patterned after that of the United States was adopted, and Guadalupe Victoria was duly elected president. Victoria's career as a Mexican president was rather out of the ordinary, for he served his full term in peace.

He was followed by Manuel Gomez Pedraza, but hardly had Señor Pedraza taken his seat when along came another revolution; and congress, having annulled Pedraza's election altogether, handed over the office to Vicente Guerrero. Then it was that Santa Anna began to edge himself forward. The Spanish expedition of which we have spoken landed in Mexico, only to collapse very shortly and surrender to Santa Anna, who from

that time was the "great man" of the Mexicans. Anastasio Bustamante overthrew Guerrero, but was himself overthrown by Santa Anna, and Santa Anna was elected president.

His notion of being a constitutional president was, first, to nullify acts of congress that didn't suit him; next, to forbid the old congress to meet; then, to have a new congress elected under his own supervision. These were his first steps to centralize authority in his own hands, but by no means the last. Before long he was virtually dictator, and for upwards of forty years he was a man to be reckoned with in Mexico. He was a slight, dark little person, rather fastidious about his appearance, very Mexican in manners and tastes. In the way he managed to achieve his own ends among his countrymen, he showed a good deal of cunning. He was always immensely ambitious and vain, believing that he had a special destiny and often calling himself "The Napoleon of the West." Add a streak of almost savage cruelty, and we have a fair idea of Santa Anna. The object dearest to his heart was making himself emperor — a second and more splendid Iturbide. This he never quite achieved and at last he ceased to be a factor at all in Mexican affairs, dying ob-

scurely so late as 1876. But before he finally dropped from power, he was to learn Sam Houston's quality as a soldier, and how Sam Houston could treat an enemy.

We are not to think of the Mexican republic as ever a republic in the sense that the United States is. Not only was it continually upset by selfish military revolutions, but its public men had little or no respect for constitution or laws; they conducted things in a way that Americans would have thought decidedly unbearable.

Let us now glance at the history of Texas. It is small wonder that Texans have always shown an enthusiastic pride in their earlier annals. Those annals were crowded with heroic events — with great deeds by notable men. There is the unflinching Austin, waiting at the doors of treacherous officials, or stifling in a dirty Mexican jail. There is the ever-glorious defense of the Alamo, where Texans defied death as coolly as any men have ever done, and to the last man fell fighting. There is the field of San Jacinto, where the tiny army that Houston had trained rushed forward to victory with "Remember the Alamo!" as its fierce battle cry. A story made up of such episodes as these will always fascinate us even if we read it

as we might read any tale of patience and courage and splendid bravery.

Our interest is deepened, however, as we realize what a significance this story had as a chapter in the larger story of the United States. When, after varying fortunes, Texas was annexed to this country, a territory was gained larger than France and England combined, and an independent nation was absorbed which might possibly have become an unfriendly neighbor. There is also plenty of good evidence to cause us to believe that if Texas had not been annexed to this country, some of the European nations would have thrust a finger into the pie and made us no end of trouble. Then, too, it was Texas that led to the Mexican War and the opening-up of the great Southwest, clear to the Pacific coast.

A great many of these matters we cannot, indeed, fully appreciate without going much more fully into the subject. But we can follow the plain story of what happened in Texas; and, as we go on, we shall see how Sam Houston was the one who made the freedom of Texas a reality; and the one who, more than any other, helped it to grow from small beginnings to be of real importance in the world.

Away back toward the end of the seventeenth century, that rather strange man, the Sieur de la Salle, founded a colony in southeastern Texas, near the mouth of the Colorado River. This gave his native land of France a claim to a wide region included in what was formerly called Louisiana — wide, but by no means clearly defined. Louisiana was ceded by France to Spain in 1763, ceded back again in 1801, and in 1803 bought from France by the United States. The treaty between France and this country provided that the inhabitants of Louisiana should be "incorporated in the Union of the United States." This did not, however, apply to Texas which continued, as it had been, under Spanish rule. When Mexico revolted against Spain, Texas took some share in the revolutionary movement. She sent a representative to the Mexican congress of 1824; but when the federal constitution was adopted, it was found that she did not have a large enough population to qualify as an independent state, so she was made a part of the state of Coahuila-Texas. It was pretty plainly hinted at that time that she would be allowed to set up housekeeping for herself later on.

Two attempts were made by American presidents to negotiate with Mexico for the transfer

of Texas — one by John Quincy Adams, the other and more persistent by Andrew Jackson. The Mexicans were rather alarmed at this and in 1830 a decree was issued that was intended, so far as possible, to prevent any more American colonists from going into Texas.

There were at that time other American settlements on Texas soil, but the future growth and welfare of the region depended on the colony founded by Stephen F. Austin. Austin was born in Virginia in 1793. His father, Moses Austin, came from Connecticut, and after tarrying in Virginia and Missouri, he started in 1820 for Texas, hoping there to change his run of ill luck. He rode on horseback all the way from what is now Washington County, Missouri, to San Antonio de Bexar. There he petitioned the Spanish authorities for the right to establish in Texas a colony of immigrants that he proposed to bring from the United States. His petition was forwarded to the capital for approval, and then he started back on his thousand-mile ride. He had not gone far when he was set upon by his fellow-travelers, robbed, and left to shift for himself. He kept on, in bad weather, living on nothing but pecan nuts and acorns, until he reached the cabin

of a hospitable settler near the Sabine. After he finally arrived in Missouri he began preparations to remove to Texas, but the exposure and hardships he had suffered had so weakened him that he died after having received word that his petition had been granted.

His son Stephen then went to look over the country and pick out a suitable location, and he chose a tract between the lower reaches of the Colorado and Brazos rivers. It was without inhabitants other than stray Indians or wandering trappers. Austin's advertisements for settlers drew quite a number of persons. The grants of land were liberal, and the settlers were allowed to hold slaves. Austin sent a schooner laden with tools and supplies, while he and his settlers went overland. The schooner made a landing at the mouth of the Brazos. Austin waited a long time at the appointed place — the mouth of the Colorado. Then the settlers had to begin their work with such implements as they happened to have brought along. Meanwhile, Spanish rule in Mexico had come to an end, and Austin did not know whether his grant would be renewed or not. He set out for Mexico City, and his trip was an even more dangerous and difficult one than Moses Austin had made from

Missouri to San Antonio. Stephen Austin rode 1200 miles or more through a country that had been quite disorganized by a long revolution and in which law and order were no more than words. From Monterey to the capital he had but one comrade.

Iturbide, the Most Serene Agustin I., renewed the grant, and Austin was about ready to go home when Santa Anna's revolt sent Agustin an exile to Leghorn, and there was the grant to be renewed for the second time. Austin once more was successful, but when in 1823 he returned to the colony after his long absence, he found that a number of the settlers had gone elsewhere and those who remained were discouraged. But nothing could discourage Austin. He soon was busy getting new settlers to join the enterprise, and by 1824 the outlook was hopeful. Had there been a wise and stable government in Mexico, all might have gone well. Certainly Austin gave his whole heart to the project, and through all the trials of those first pioneer days he showed the fineness of his character.

In devoting his life to this work, he had abandoned a career that was full of promise. Born, like Houston, in Virginia, and in the same year, 1793, he had been far better educated than Houston, being an alumnus of Transylvania University, at

Lexington, Kentucky. At twenty he had been admitted to the bar, and at twenty-seven he was a district judge in Arkansas Territory. His prospects for ease and distinction were excellent, but he put them all aside to enter upon a kind of life to which he had not been accustomed, as Houston had.

He founded his "capital" at San Felipe de Austin, on the Brazos. This is not to be confused with the present Austin, which is on the Colorado. Although it was quite within his power, as *empresario* ("grantee," or "contractor") to act as a little dictator, he chose to do nothing of the sort. He established courts in which strict justice was dealt out to everybody. He organized a local "guard," or militia. He saw to it that a proper record was kept of all titles to land. He was the final authority in everything, but he ruled by sheer kindness and unassuming ability. As one loyal Texan has put it, "Men delighted to intrust him with their lives, their property, their fortunes."

He had had no military training; he was not a ready speaker. When stormy times came, he deferred to Houston, and Houston, the newcomer, who knew how to stir men to action by his words and how to guide men to victory on the field, became the leader.

CHAPTER VI

A Fresh Enterprise

Around Houston's departure for Mexico certain writers have endeavored to throw an air of mystery. They hint at very good reasons for the belief that he went under secret orders from Jackson to foment revolution against Mexico and finally obtain Texas for the United States. It may as well be said that such hints have no basis whatever. They are a repetition of gossip that, ever since 1832, has been passed along without any attempt to find facts to support it. If such a thing were true, it would constitute a serious charge against Jackson, and, to say the least, would lead us to think Sam Houston a hypocrite.

When news came to Jackson, back in 1829, that Houston was planning a hair-brained invasion of Texas, he took no stock in the report but at the same time in a letter to Houston showed his disapproval of the idea. "I must really have thought

you deranged," he wrote, "to have believed you had so wild a scheme in contemplation." So far as is known, Houston never, either then or later, planned anything of the sort. The possibilities in an expedition like that may have suggested themselves to Houston, as they had to Aaron Burr, and, no doubt, to others. This we can neither deny nor affirm. It is reasonably plain, however, that from 1829 to 1832 Houston was hardly in a position to direct such an enterprise. Furthermore, it is not at all probable that he would have embarrassed Jackson by anything so sure to bring hostile criticism upon the administration.

Except to those bent on making it otherwise, Jackson's attitude is clear and frank enough. Writing to the United States minister in Mexico that a revolution in Texas was quite likely to occur, he said: "This our Govt will be charged with fomenting; altho all our constitutional powers will be exercised to prevent." When the revolution was under way, he told the envoy from Texas that the United States was pledged to strict neutrality and must observe it. Shortly before San Jacinto, Austin made an urgent appeal to Jackson for help; but on the back of Austin's

letter the President jotted this memorandum: "The writer does not reflect that we have a treaty with Mexico, and our national faith is pledged to support it." Jackson was usually blunt and to the point; we have no reason for thinking he didn't mean what he said. He was no coward; if he had aided in starting the revolution, it is fair to assume that at a crisis like San Jacinto he would have stood by it.

What, then, of Houston? How did he behave after he arrived in Texas? He was a delegate to the convention that met at San Felipe, April 1, 1833, and became chairman of the committee to draft a state constitution. Had Mexico accepted that constitution, revolution would have been averted. When a provisional government was organized at San Felipe in November, 1835, he was a member of the committee that prepared a "Declaration of the People of Texas." Article 1 of that Declaration stated that the Texans had "taken up arms in defense of their rights and liberties, which were threatened by the encroachments of military despots, and in defense of the Republican Principle of the Federal Constitution of Mexico of eighteen hundred and twenty-four." When the Mexican government issued a demand

for the leaders of the war party, Houston was not mentioned. All the evidence we have goes to show that Houston was at first opposed to revolution and supported it only when he saw it could not be avoided. This is getting ahead of our story, to be sure; but it is best at the outset to dismiss the idle rumor that has been carried over from one book to another, and that would impugn without reason the good faith of both Jackson and Houston.

Houston did go to Texas with a commission from President Jackson. That commission was to try to bring about the return of such Indians as had gone from the United States to Texas; and to arrange treaties with the Comanches and other tribes for the protection of border settlers and traders. Houston set out in December, 1832.

While in Arkansas Territory he had met Elias Rector, United States marshal of the Territory and afterward governor of the State; and Albert Pike, who, in place of the nonsense attributed to Dan Emmett, wrote words for the tune of "Dixie" that are really stirring and appropriate but that nobody ever sings. There is a story told by Pike, and given by others in different versions, that Houston, when he was leaving Arkansas, rode for a day or two in Rector's company. Houston was

mounted on a small, bob-tailed pony; Rector, on a larger and better horse. When they were about to go their own ways, Houston proposed a trade, because, he said, a bob-tailed steed would have no defense against the flies that were such a pest in the region whither he was bound. Rector agreed and the two shifted their bridles and saddles. As Houston bade his friend good-by, he turned to the pony with words that General Pike said were something like this:

"Jack, my faithful old servant, you and I must part. We have been friends a long time and have been mutually beneficial to each other. You have been a good servant to me; but, Jack, there comes a time in the life of every man when he and his friends must separate. Though you have served me long and faithfully, and we have been true friends, the time has now come when we must take final leave of each other. At such a time it is but just, my good old companion, that I should give expression to my feelings. You are a faithful pony. You are a hardy pony. You are a sure-footed pony. But cruel man has made you defenseless against the common enemy of your kind, the pesky flies. This is the hot season, and where I am going they are very thick. Against these

pests Providence saw fit to give you defense, but man has taken it from you, and against them, without a tail, you are helpless. I must, therefore, with pain and anguish part from you."

When Houston was ready to leave, Rector said: "Houston, I wish to give you something as a keepsake before we separate, and I have nothing that will do for the gift except my razor. I never saw a better one. They say one ought not to give a friend an edged tool, as it might cut friendship, but this one will not cut your friendship and mine."

Houston, Pike related, answered, as he took the razor, "Rector, I accept your gift, and, mark my words, if I have good luck, this razor will sometime shave the chin of the president of a republic."

The latter part of this story will hardly bear close examination. Houston may have really spoken in that way, either in jest or expressing that belief in his future which we have seen in him before. After he reached Texas, he determined to win fame by linking himself with the rise of a new country. Perhaps he had done so even before that. Whatever the truth may be, his prediction to Major Rector sounds rather like an invention. If true, it is one more contradiction of the idea that Houston went to Texas as a secret

agent of Andrew Jackson to stir up a revolt that should end as quickly as possible by Texas being turned over to the United States.

He rode along to Nacogdoches, and then to San Felipe, the capital or headquarters of Stephen Austin's colony; but Austin happened to be absent, so the two did not meet at that time. From San Felipe he journeyed to San Antonio de Bexar with Colonel James Bowie, who had come from Chatahoula parish in Louisiana on a filibustering raid into Texas, and had remained there. Bowie was already renowned for his exploits and hardihood. He died in a grim fashion that suited him well. At the defense of the Alamo he lay injured on a cot, but he kept on firing his pistols until the Mexicans shot him. It was he who invented that terribly cruel weapon, the bowie knife, the very sight of which, Davy Crockett said, was "enough to give a man of a squeamish stomach the cholic, especially before breakfast." With this Colonel Bowie, then, Houston rode westward, and at San Antonio Bowie introduced him to Ruiz, the Mexican commandant, and to Veramendi, Mexican vice-governor of Texas and Bowie's father-in-law. After such an introduction, Houston was pleasantly received by the authorities,

who gave him permission to meet the Comanche chiefs. A council was held, at which Houston presented medals to the chiefs and arranged with them that they should send a delegation to Fort Gibson to talk with commissioners of the United States government. This arrangement would undoubtedly have been carried out if the treacherous Mexican officials had not interfered after Houston had gone. They were not used to such frank diplomacy as Houston's, and presumably thought that the Americans were trying in this way to get an influence over the Texas Indians, or to make with them a treaty or compact unfavorable to Mexico.

Houston, believing his mission thus far successful, took up his return journey over the same route; going first to San Felipe, where he met Austin face to face, and then to Nacogdoches, whose citizens asked him to make that settlement his permanent home. Everybody in Nacogdoches was talking about a convention of all Texas that was to gather at San Felipe in the spring. As we know, any further colonization of Americans in Texas had been forbidden by law. The Americans in Texas didn't propose to have all future grants of land restricted to Mexicans only; and, besides,

they didn't wish to be yoked any longer to the Mexican state of Coahuila. So there was a buzz of excitement in little Nacogdoches, and a sense of something about to happen, as Houston rode out from it to cross the Sabine. He went to Nachitoches, in Louisiana, where he prepared his formal report for the War Department. In some two months he had traveled more than a thousand miles, and during that time he had made up his mind to throw in his fortunes with the Texans. He was soon back in Nacogdoches, where he was made heartily welcome, and, although not an "old settler," he was chosen a delegate to the approaching convention.

CHAPTER VII

Texas and the Texans

Houston was now a full-fledged Texan. Among what sort of people had he come? What was the country like?

Well, to begin with, the country was not yet greatly different in many respects from what it had been before Europeans came across the seas. Wonderful resources were there in coal, iron, oil, timber, and various minerals; but they were still unheeded. Rich alluvial soil was there, waiting for the plow, but the plowboy's song was not yet heard. Not more than seven or eight thousand bales of cotton went out of the whole region. There were no great fields of waving grain. The little cereal that was raised was wholly for household use. Men burned away the undergrowth and then went over the blackened fields, dropping their maize in holes made with a sharp stick.

Drovers rounded up the mustangs for the markets at San Antonio or over the line in Louisiana. A few white trappers hunted for skins and furs; and it was risky work among Indians that were often hostile. Stray traders exchanged trinkets and ammunition for such peltries as they could get from the Indians. Colonists were clearing away the canebrakes, or chopping down the trees, making ready for the harvests that they hoped were to be. Or they were building rude cabins, or guarding their few head of stock. Seed corn was very dear. In the beginning of Austin's colony around San Felipe, the settlers depended a good deal on wild game for their food; and when drought made the bear and deer scarce, they sometimes had to eat the flesh of the wild ponies.

Among the wild animals common in Texas then, were pronghorns, leopards, bears, panthers; the black fox, deer, raccoon, otter, and beaver. Occasionally bison wandered in. Flocks of wild geese and duck swept across the sky. Trumpeter and whistling swans sometimes arrived in crowds. Wild turkeys abounded.

In 1831 a visitor, writing from Bolivar, about sixty miles by water up the Brazos, said: "Our neighbor at one hunt brought in three bears, a

Mexican hog, a rabbit, and two bee trees [meaning, presumably, honey from two bee trees]. Our carpenter, without leaving his bench five minutes, killed several wild ducks, the finest I ever tasted."

The few small towns were squalid and unkempt. They had not developed much since the Spaniards founded them, or since the monks had built the quaint, castle-like missions, which were the only important structures across all those plains, and whose picturesque ruins keep green, as no other monuments do, the memory of those days of adventure. Even a dozen years later an English lady wrote: ". . . Comfort, at least domestic household comfort, is quite unknown in this country. . . . Carpets, well-made beds, and all such necessaries of life, are unknown or despised." She goes on to tell an amusing story of how the French *chargé d'affaires*, on a visit to an inland settlement, was shown at night to an apartment whose walls let in the prairie winds and through whose roof he could see the bright stars. This seemed poor accommodation, indeed, to this agent of a great civilized power; but, weary from his journey, he was just dropping to sleep when in strode a huge Kentuckian, armed with full equipment of pistols and bowie knife, who remarked

in the most matter-of-fact way, "Well, stranger, I guess I'll take the inside of the bed, if it's the same to you?" It appears that the official, however, preferred the floor to having a burly newcomer interposed between his person and the wall. Doubtless the Kentuckian had been familiar with many worse quarters than this, and thought the whole affair quite a joke.

In the farming or ranching sections, the house generally consisted of a sort of double cabin — one apartment for sleeping, one for eating, with a space between, uninclosed on the sides, where the owner kept his saddles and tools and where in warm weather he took his meals. Usually separate from the main house were the kitchen and the smokehouse, where meat was smoked and kept.

Judged by the standards of London or Paris, Texas must have seemed a wild spot. Foreign travelers there failed to understand, as they did even in the United States, that a new civilization was just in its beginnings, and that everything could not be done in a day. Besides, Texas was then poor. The Spaniards had done little for it, the Mexicans nothing at all. The Mexicans had ceased to maintain even the old military posts that the Spaniards had established. The Indians

did very much as they pleased. In the later years of Spanish rule, when Spain was busy with internal troubles in Mexico, the Comanches and Apaches, who roamed the western marches, came to have no respect for the white man's rule. The Comanches would even go so far as to ride into San Antonio de Bexar, dismount in the plaza or square, and leave their horses to be caught and fed by the terrified soldiers of the little garrison. These Indians despised the half-breed Mexicans and acted accordingly.

For years border roughs had wandered from Louisiana into northeastern Texas, making a business of robbing traders and wayfarers. For years, too, pirates and filibusters had operated along the coast. Most notorious of these was Jean Lafitte, who is said to have claimed that a Spanish sea captain once ill-treated him and that he therefore declared war to the death against Spain. Lafitte declined a captaincy in Great Britain's navy, fought with Jackson's army at New Orleans, and in 1817 started a kind of pirates' paradise on Galveston Island. Leader of several hundred men, he preyed on the commerce not only of Spain but of the United States, until in 1821 the government at Washington sent an expedition to

oust him. He submitted in a most tame and unpiratical fashion; and on the very site of his town of Campeachy the present city of Galveston afterwards grew up.

Although at the time of Houston's coming, Texas had not yet made great material progress, the foundations had been laid for a new order of things. Austin and his colony had brought into that chaos a spirit that the Mexicans were beginning to fear. The struggle that was to follow was at the bottom a clash between two very different types of society. In 1830, Alaman, the Mexican secretary of foreign and internal relations, sent to the Mexican congress a message that led to the national decree by which all American colonizing in Texas was practically forbidden. Alaman denounced the Americans and their methods, saying that they came in under a pretense of colonizing but were really trying to get control, raise a disturbance, and finally take the region for themselves. Mexico went to work to combat the new influence in a blundering and mistaken way. General Teran was sent to enforce the decree. Garrisons composed very largely of convicts were established. A number of new immigrants were expelled. From that decree of

1830 and its clumsy enforcement, we may date the feeling of resentment and ill-will that was to lead to the Texas revolution of 1836.

The other contractors who had obtained grants of land did not bring in many settlers. Austin's colony led in spreading the American spirit, and gradually that spirit dominated the whole anti-Mexican movement. His colonists scattered widely, from the old San Antonio road to the sea-coast and from the San Jacinto River to the Lavaca. Most of these men wanted elbow room. They were like the old Tennessee planter that an early writer on Texas tells about.

"Mr. C—, the gentleman in question, had removed from his own State to Red River, and after a few years' absence, a friend left Tennessee for the purpose of paying him a visit. Arrived at Red River, he found that Mr. C— had relinquished his abode there for a settlement at Nacogdoches. Proceeding to Nacogdoches, he was shown his vacant location, and was instructed to seek him at a plantation on the Brazos. Having traveled to the Brazos, he was told that the Squire was no longer there, but located at C—'s Creek on the Colorado. Here at last he met the object of his search, to all appearances very snugly settled.

The visitor having expressed his gratification at finding his old friend after a long search, so pleasantly *fixed*, — 'Ah,' said Mr. C—, 'I must move again, they begin to crowd me, I can't go out with the rifle!' — The settlements on the Colorado were then few and far between and Mr. C— was in his 85th year." He was of the type of Crockett and Boone — men who felt "crowded" when they could see the smoke from another man's chimney.

Most of the American settlers in Texas were people to be proud of — pioneers in the true sense, the same kind of folk that drove their great covered wagons by hard and dangerous trails to the new regions of our distant West. If there was any difference, it was that the Texas pioneers were "in certain ways peculiar and notable." A student of the Foreign Office papers in the Public Record Office at London quotes these words from a memoir sent by General Wavell, an Englishman in the Mexican service, for the information of the British government: "To as much if not more natural Talent, and energy to call it into play, and knowledge of all which is practically useful under every Emergency of the most Civilized Nations, they [the Texas people] add a reckless hardihood, a restless Spirit of Adventure, resources and con-

fidence in themselves, keen perception, coolness, contempt of other men, usages, and Laws, and of Death, equal to the Wild Indian." The officer who wrote this shows a certain contempt for the laws of English style and capitalization; but the description he sent, although it was written some years after Texan independence was gained, may be taken as about as good as any that could be given in equal space.

These Texans were hardy and independent, essentially law-abiding, but not likely to pay much heed to laws which they considered unjust. They had come into this new country because they had heard the soil was fertile and easily tilled, and the climate healthful and pleasant. The greater number were from the southern states of the Union. As they intended to cultivate and develop the rich farm lands, and as they were used to the institution of slavery, many of them took negro slaves along with them, so that at the beginning of the revolution, there were probably about a thousand slaves held by Americans in Texas. The owners did not see how they could get along without the help of slaves in working the land and making it profitable on a large scale. The Mexicans did not keep negro slaves, as they had found

what was called the "peonage" system more profitable. Under this system the Indians of Mexico were held in what was virtually bondage, their lot being really much worse than that of negro slaves had ever been under the better class of owners in the southern United States.

Besides these planter-settlers, there were some who had gone to Texas because of financial troubles due rather to bad luck or imprudence than to dishonesty; others who were fugitives from justice but whose crimes had been committed hastily rather than from any essentially wrong intent; and still others — a minority — whom we must classify as desperate characters. Austin took pains to show any desperadoes that they were not wanted in his colony. He expelled them if he thought they ought to be expelled, and sometimes they were chastised pretty severely if, in his judgment, that had to be done. But, as a whole, the Americans in Texas were a stout-hearted, self-reliant set of people. In Austin's colony self-government was early in force, and popular elections and freedom of speech were the rule.

There were able men in Texas besides Austin and Houston — men like Dr. Branch T. Archer, from Virginia; the brothers John A. and William

H. Wharton, from Tennessee; Henry Smith, from Kentucky; David G. Burnet, from New Jersey; Anson Jones, from Massachusetts; and Thomas J. Rusk, from South Carolina. Such men were well qualified to organize a successful resistance to Mexico; and when independence had been won, they could give Texas, though not yet materially a prosperous state, a certain dignity and character before the world. Sam Houston, however, was needed to manage affairs — to focus and direct the movement for independence after it had begun.

The Mexican government did nothing to protect the settlers from rascals and marauders, but the settlers protected themselves. The Indians had fallen into a way of driving off cattle, horses, or mules from herds belonging to Mexican half-breeds. When they tried this with the Americans, they soon found it unwise. We have a picture of the adventurous Texans as they sallied forth on their punitive expeditions against Indian thieves:

"Mounted on a favorite horse, armed with the trusty rifle, and accompanied by their dogs, they can explore their way through the woods by the sun and the bark of the trees. Clad in their usual

homely dress, an otter skin cunningly folded and sewed is the depository of tobacco, ammunition, and means for kindling a fire; a wallet slung behind the saddle contains sustenance for man and horse."

It was from such material as this, needing only discipline to make it effective, that Houston developed the courageous little army that won at San Jacinto.

Yet these same men who could be quick on the trigger and stern toward their enemies, were kindly and hospitable to a fault. In later days, when things were less primitive and folk had come in who were more reserved and "stand-offish," an old traveler said that when he was looking for a house where he might pass the night, he would ask, "How long have you been in this country?" If the answer was, "I disremember how long," or to the effect that the host had been there a number of years, the traveler would dismount from his weary horse, sure of a simple, hearty welcome and the best meal the house afforded — bacon and eggs, perhaps, or venison, with freshly made maize-cakes and hot coffee. Hospitality, the boast of the Old South, was equally characteristic of Young Texas.

This is a rough sketch of the country to which Sam Houston had come, and of the people whom the poet has called "the glory of the race of rangers." But events were now crowding upon each other in Texas, and we must follow them.

CHAPTER VIII

Beginnings of Revolt

When General Teran appeared, with his convict soldiers, the Texans began to feel that there was trouble ahead. Austin had a strong sense of his obligations to the Mexican government. He tried his best to hold the Texans to a conservative policy. The settlers on their part had the greatest confidence in him, but they began to break away from his policy. At the same time it was Austin's influence that kept the early stages of the revolution on a higher plane than might otherwise have been the case.

A space of six years had been allowed during which supplies for Austin's colony could be brought in free of any customs duty. As soon as that period was up, the Mexicans closed all the seaports except Anahuac, on Galveston Bay. It was important that tact should be used in beginning to collect duties from people who were not used to

paying any. Tact, however, had no place in Mexican procedure. Teran put in command of Anahuac one John D. Bradburn, a heavy-handed, violent Kentuckian who had gone into Mexico on a filibustering expedition and remained there looking for anything that might come his way. It may be imagined that the Texans didn't have a very high opinion of an American who, under such circumstances, was willing to command a force of Mexican convicts. Bradburn put thirty miles of coast under martial law, and then arrested and imprisoned several prominent colonists for alleged insubordination. One of them was William B. Travis, who was to win glory for himself as leader of the defense of the Alamo. At this the less conservative element among the settlers got the upper hand and started in to act.

A body of men marched against Anahuac. It was decided that they must have cannon, and a schooner sailed with them from Brazoria, a little town on the Brazos River. The Mexican commandant at Velasco, at the mouth of the river, would not allow the schooner to pass, so the colonists attacked and captured the place with severe loss to the defenders. When it came to marksmanship, the army of Mexico was not in the

same class with these Americans, nearly every one of whom had been trained in the school of the frontier. This was really the first blood shed in the Texas revolution, and the date was June 27, 1832.

No further operations were carried on just then, for the Mexicans removed Bradburn, who got out of the country in disguise, and released the Americans who had been imprisoned. The Mexican troops at Anahuac decided to leave that post and join the army of Santa Anna, who had started his revolution against President Bustamante and who was rapidly gaining ground against the Bustamante party. Other garrisons did likewise, until only that at Nacogdoches was left. There were three hundred and fifty men there in the Old Stone Fort. Compelled by the colonists to retire from the town, they, too, declared for Santa Anna and handed over their commander to the Texans. The more liberal Mexicans were hoping for greater things from Santa Anna. The colonists also took his side and drew up resolutions supporting him. Possibly they did this to justify themselves for having taken matters into their own hands — a step that was due rather to resentment against Mexican methods in general than to any special

liking for either of the national parties. Still, Santa Anna was talking a good deal about upholding the constitution and the laws, and Bustamante had certainly been a tyrant. At any rate, many of the colonists were at this time loud in their praise of a man against whom they were fighting four years later.

There was a kind of minor convention of the Texan people at San Felipe de Austin in October, 1832. Petitions were adopted to be sent to the state and national governments, but the only substantial result was the appointment of a central committee of safety at San Felipe. This committee was given power to call another convention. While Santa Anna was fighting and scheming his way to the presidency down in Mexico, the Texans, beside their winter fires, were earnestly discussing everything; the radicals among them were winning over those who were reluctant, and the whole country was in a ferment.

Sam Houston grasped the situation with his usual insight — an insight that has led one writer to remark that "Probably nothing in ordinary human nature escaped his observation." In a letter which he wrote from Natchitoches, Louisiana, to President Jackson in February, 1833, he

said: "Mexico is involved in civil war. The Federal Constitution has never been in operation. The Government is essentially despotic, and must be so for years to come. The rulers have not honesty, and the people have not intelligence. The people of Texas are determined to form a state government, and separate from Coahuila, and unless Mexico is soon restored to order, and the Constitution revived and reënacted, the province of Texas will remain separate from the Confederacy of Mexico. . . . I have traveled nearly five hundred miles across Texas, and am now enabled to judge pretty correctly of the soil and resources of the country, and I have no hesitation in pronouncing it the finest country, for its extent, upon the globe; for the greater portion of it is richer and more healthy than West Tennessee. . . . My opinion is that Texas, by her members in Convention, will, by the 1st of April, declare all that country as Texas proper, and form a State Constitution."

This letter also refers to Jackson's attempts to purchase Texas from Mexico, suggests that the Texans themselves will soon be in a position to arrange for the transfer of the country "on fair terms," and declares that public opinion will not

sanction such a transfer to any country except to the United States. It is rather difficult to see how any one could make this letter agree with the theory that Houston was acting as a secret agent for Jackson with the purpose to get Texas for nothing by means of a revolution partly engineered from Washington.

The convention of the people of Texas did meet on April 1 at San Felipe, and Houston was there as a delegate from Nacogdoches. William H. Wharton was elected president, and Houston was chairman of the committee to draft a constitution to be submitted for approval by the Mexican government. Austin and two others were appointed commissioners to present this constitution, but Austin went alone. He was not altogether in sympathy with the aggressive ideas of the convention, but he bowed to the wishes of the majority, and went to Mexico at his own expense. An epidemic of cholera was then running its course in the City of Mexico, but Austin remained there for six unsatisfactory months. Then, in December, he left without having obtained anything definite from the authorities. He had traveled as far as Saltillo, in Coahuila, when he was arrested and sent back.

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STATUE OF AUSTIN IN STATUARY HALL OF THE CAPITOL, WASHINGTON

This statue is the work of Elizabet Ney. It represents the sculptor's idea of Austin at the time he established his colony.

It seems that Gomez Farias, the vice president, who was acting as president at the time, had found out that Austin had written a letter to the people of Bexar, the western department of Texas, asking them to help in the movement for a better government. For a year and a half Austin was kept a prisoner, a large part of the time in solitary confinement. He was the most conservative of the Texans, yet he suffered more than any one else at the hands of the Mexican government. Small wonder that in the journal which he kept while in prison he wrote this sentence: "Philanthropy is but another name for trouble."

During this time Santa Anna held a council, at which Austin, while still a prisoner, was present, to deliberate regarding Texas affairs. It was decided that Texas would have to remain a part of the compound state of Coahuila and Texas, and that four thousand troops would have to be ordered to Bexar. After listening to Austin, however, Santa Anna promised to repeal that article of the national decree of 1830 by which any further colonizing from the United States was forbidden. That is to say, he promised to do so unless he later thought of reasons why he shouldn't.

At last, in 1835, Austin was freed and told he

might go home. His two journeys to Mexico, the first in 1822–23, the second in 1833–35, had been far from agreeable. They had imposed upon him hardships that probably helped to shorten his life, for he died at forty-three. His sojourns at the capital must have shown him how thoroughly unfit the Mexican government was to govern anything. Yet this remarkable man was hopeful. He told the British minister that the Texans would insist that settlers who had come in since the decree of 1830 should have their titles to land respected, and that no more Mexican troops would be allowed to remain on Texan soil. But as for "independence" — why, the Texans weren't striving for that.

Strictly speaking, of course, he was quite right. Other Texans had said, and were saying, practically that very thing. More than that, the convention of 1833, by a vote of more than two to one, had declared for the federal constitution of 1824. This was the constitution that had been proclaimed as a result of the military revolution against Iturbide, led by that clever young officer Antonio de Santa Anna. The wheel had revolved a few times, and Santa Anna had so utterly turned his back on constitutions that he was now en-

grossed in making himself Grand Mogul. Men like the Texans, who believed in universal suffrage, trial by jury, freedom of the press, and kindred rights, were bound to come into conflict with Santa Anna or any other despot. Unconsciously, in spite of themselves, independence was the goal toward which they were headed. In that respect, at least, the revolution in Texas was quite like the American Revolution: its momentum, when it was under way, carried it farther than most men had bargained for. As his letter to Jackson has shown us, Sam Houston saw more clearly than men who had been in Texas a good deal longer.

In January, 1835, the Mexicans again took steps for the collection of customs duties in Texas, and a Captain Tenorio was sent with a little force of men to aid the customs officer at Anahuac in his labors. Then word arrived that the arbitrary Santa Anna had dissolved the state government in Coahuila and put in a creature of his own as governor. This was more than the war party in Texas thought Texans ought to stand. It didn't look to them very much like getting back to the constitution of 1824, or like the sort of thing that ought longer to be tolerated among freemen. So the war party, ignoring for the time being the

conservatives and those who didn't think the time yet ripe for interference, sent a band of men to Anahuac under command of young Travis. Travis soon had Tenorio out of Anahuac and on the road to Bexar. The next move of the Mexicans was to send a man named Thompson — there were men of all sorts of nationalities and names looking for fame and fortune in Mexico — up to Anahuac with a schooner. This Thompson, with his little schooner, the *Correo*, took it into his head to capture a United States trading vessel somewhere near the coast. The Texans thereupon seized the *Correo* and took it to New Orleans, where they turned over the inglorious Thompson to the authorities to be tried on the charge of piracy.

Volunteers now began to organize for defense. Every man had his own rifle and knew how to use it. That was the essential part of their outfit. As to the rest of it, they were a motley crowd of citizen-soldiers, each man garbed as pleased him best, with nothing uniform about them save the determination to do their part in the war which all felt to be very close at hand. It remained for Sam Houston to take his place as their commander.

CHAPTER IX

Sam Houston as Leader

Houston was biding his time. In fact, he was biding it so quietly that it has been supposed he left Texas not long after the convention of 1833. By the fall of 1835, however, he was certainly [illegible]in in Nacogdoches.

Austin's return from Mexico was celebrated, amid much rejoicing, by a public dinner at Brazoria. Austin spoke at this dinner, and although he was calm, as always, yet he was positive, too, in declaring that Texas must have her constitutional rights. He also said that he was in favor of a "consultation," which was simply a name for another general convention, at which Texans were to decide upon some kind of definite action for the future. But very definite action was taken without waiting for any consultation or convention.

On the straight highway from San Felipe de Austin to Bexar, right where that road crossed the

river Guadalupe, was the town of Gonzales — quite a flourishing little place, in the midst of far-rolling prairie. This town of Gonzales had a cannon, a little four- or six-pounder which had been supplied to it in 1831 to overawe the Indians. Colonel Ugartechea demanded that this small fieldpiece be given up. Ugartechea was in command of the Mexican troops at Bexar, and the Texans had had to do with him before; for it was he who had surrendered Velasco in 1832. His demand met with a "no," so he sent a detachment of about one hundred men, led by a subordinate, to take the cannon by force.

Gonzales was on the east bank of the Guadalupe, and the Mexican troops were coming from the west. The townspeople, therefore, in order to gain time until a force of volunteers could be got together from the surrounding country to help them, removed the ferryboat. The Mexicans then fell back to a point a few miles from the river; but the Texans crossed the stream, marched after them, and scattered them in a brief encounter in which the little cannon did its busy share. Gonzales had suffered no harm for that time, but it was later to do so, as we shall see in the course of our martial story.

There was now a burst of energy on the part of the Texans. Goliad, one of the oldest of Texas towns, on the north bank of the San Antonio River some eighty-five miles southeast of San Antonio, was easily surprised and taken by less than fifty men, and with the town were captured arms and money, both much needed by the revolutionists. From Goliad went about forty men who took a post of perhaps as many houses, called by the Aztec name of Lipantitlan, on the southwest bank of the Nueces River, some four miles above the Irish settlement of San Patricio. Even Austin, who had long before been given the rank of lieutenant colonel by the Mexicans, and was often called Colonel Austin, now turned military, and marched away from Gonzales at the head of three hundred and fifty volunteers bound for the capture of Bexar. Bexar had just been occupied by General Martin Perfecto de Cos with five hundred fresh troops, so that the siege, if we may call it such, took longer than it otherwise would have done.

Bexar, or San Antonio de Bexar (now called simply San Antonio, and the county seat of Bexar county), dated from 1718. The better sort of houses were of the Spanish-Mexican type, built

of a kind of freestone, but one story in height, with flat roofs around which ran low parapets. In the center of the town was the ancient church of San Fernando (begun in 1734), upon which General Cos had at this time built a platform where artillery was planted. The streets ran at right angles to the church, on either side of which were plazas or squares, and through the place meandered the San Antonio River and its tributary the San Pedro. Irrigation of the surrounding lands had been successfully tried, and a region of rich agriculture might have been developed; but with the going of the Spanish had gone, too, whatever of enterprise there had been. The population was about 2500, nearly all Mexican. A few families sought to maintain a little of the old Spanish social life.

East of the San Antonio River, looking westward across a small plaza, was an oblong, walled inclosure, with a group of dismantled, half-ruined buildings. This was what remained of the Mission San Antonio de Valero, from which the friars had long since withdrawn to Mexico. The chapel of this Mission was to become famous as the Alamo. *Alamo* is the Spanish word for cottonwood; and as there were numerous cottonwood trees near the building, it has generally been supposed that this

was the explanation of the name. The business of a modern city now goes noisily on around that historic structure; but in 1835 it stood quite detached from the town, with only a few wretched *jacales*, or Mexican huts, near by.

The Texans were nearly two months in getting into Bexar. On October 28 some hundred men, under Captain James W. Fannin and Colonel James Bowie (he of the bowie knife), badly defeated a much larger number of Mexicans at Mission Concepcion, about a mile and a half below the town. Again the Texans proved their marksmanship with the rifle.

Early in October Houston had been elected commander in chief for eastern Texas, by which was meant, in a rough way, the country of which Nacogdoches was the center. From Gonzales, Austin had sent out a general hurry call for troops, and this call came to Houston while at San Augustine, east of Nacogdoches on the old San Antonio road. The story is that, taking from his pocket his last five dollars, he gave them to a good rider with word to summon east Texas to arms. Houston soon joined Austin in camp before San Antonio de Bexar.

Austin at once urged Houston to take supreme

command. Houston declined. He offered to aid Austin in drilling and organizing, but pointed out that the troops at Gonzales, before marching on Bexar, had chosen Austin as their leader, and that such a change might cause complaint among the rank and file and interfere with the blockade. A council of war was held to consider whether it would be wise to attempt to take Bexar by storm, but as Cos had well fortified himself and as the Texans had no suitable artillery, it was decided that such an attempt ought not to be made.

Meanwhile, the "consultation" or convention had gone into session at San Felipe. It appointed Austin one of three commissioners, the other two being Branch T. Archer and William H. Wharton, to visit the United States. Houston, who was a delegate, left for San Felipe, and Colonel Edward Burleson, an Indian fighter of some repute, took Austin's place as commander of the Texan forces in the field.

Burleson did not accomplish much. The autumn wore away. One company came from Mississippi to join the Texans, and two from New Orleans, but nothing of any consequence was done. Desertions from the ranks were almost constant. It was no easy task to keep a crowd

of free-and-easy frontiersmen interested in so inactive and uninspiring a siege. It looked as if they were going to break up in disorder and return home.

There was a Colonel Benjamin R. Milam, known through Texas as "old Ben Milam," who was determined to prevent such a fiasco. Milam had been imprisoned at Monterey as one of the leaders of the Texas war party, but he had escaped and joined the forces before Bexar. A Mexican deserter had brought word of the real weakness of the defenses and the discouraged mood of the garrison — most of whom were convicts and none too enthusiastic to begin with. Thinking this to be a most opportune moment, Milam gained Burleson's authority to call for volunteers, and, waving his hat, shouted out, "Who will go with old Ben Milam?"

Everything was now animated and astir. On the morning of December 5, the Texans entered the town without any sharp opposition — thus proving the truth of what the deserter had said. They made their way along from street to street, from house to house, shooting from loopholes and windows, picking off every Mexican who ventured above the barricades. On the evening

of that day, Milam, as he stood in the entrance of Veramendi Palace, the official residence of Colonel Bowie's father-in-law, was shot down by a sharpshooter concealed in a cypress tree. There is a monument to him in Milam Square in the modern city of San Antonio.

This "sniping" kind of warfare went on until the 9th, when Cos began negotiations for surrender. On the 11th was signed the capitulation, by the terms of which Cos and his officers gave their parole of honor not to oppose any further the Texan movement to reëstablish the constitution of 1824; the convict soldiers were to be escorted beyond the Rio Grande; and the regular Mexican soldiers were allowed to remain in Texas if they chose. Cos marched away on December 14, to violate his parole within a year. North of the Rio Grande there was not now a Mexican soldier bearing arms against the little company of Texans. The Mexican loss at Bexar was perhaps one hundred and fifty. That of the Texans was twenty-six wounded and two killed, of whom "old Ben Milam" was one.

Sam Houston took no prominent part in the capture of San Antonio, yet San Antonio remembers him in at least two ways. A mile north

of the city is Fort Sam Houston, headquarters of the southern department of the United States army. And when each April comes round, the townsfolk of San Antonio celebrate Sam Houston's victory at San Jacinto with a bloodless carnival known as the "Battle of the Flowers."

After the capture of San Antonio the Texans did a very queer thing. With the exception of a small force left to hold the Alamo, they simply disbanded and went home for Christmas. Their most exposed frontier was left unwatched, and in all that country were only the little garrisons at San Antonio and Goliad. This was strange; and it was to prove disastrous. The Texans were brave enough, but among them all it would seem there was only one real military leader. If they imagined that it was not necessary to maintain, increase, and improve the army in the field, Sam Houston had no such sadly impractical notion. He realized, if they did not, that the war for independence was not yet over. It must be said frankly that one cannot admire the way in which the Texans confused and mismanaged their affairs during this important winter. Sam Houston's task was made all the harder — his final achievement became the more splendid.

We must not overlook the fact that there were many Mexican "liberals" who were disgusted with Santa Anna. One of them, General Mejia, went to New Orleans, which has always been a haunt of Spanish-American refugees and conspirators; and there he collected a shipful of people, most of whom afterwards claimed — with small truth, probably, — that they had supposed themselves to be peaceable and inoffensive immigrants, bound for Texas. But their craft, sailing under the unheroic title of *Mary Jane*, carried them to Tampico, on the coast of the state of Tamaulipas. General Mejia had reckoned wrongly with his hosts. The populace, instead of giving him support, turned on him — angered, perhaps, at his having enlisted a band of foreigners — and he fled, leaving thirty-one prisoners, three of whom died and twenty-eight of whom were shot.

Wiser than Mejia was Lorenzo de Zavala, a Mexican of excellent ability and strict integrity, who escaped to Texas, was admitted to Texan councils, and became vice president of the provisional government of the new republic. A small company of Mexicans fought with the Texans at San Jacinto.

The last we saw of Houston, he was leaving the

Texan camp near San Antonio and setting out for San Felipe de Austin, where the "consultation" had met. There wasn't a quorum at first, because so many of the delegates were away with the troops; and the "consultation" did not effect a permanent organization and settle down to business until November 3.

Considering that this was a critical time for the revolutionary movement, it cannot be said that the delegates worked with very much unity. They were in session twelve days in the one room, unplastered and rough, of a little frame building. Sam Houston was there, a delegate from Nacogdoches, in his Mexican blanket and buckskin breeches — a favorite mode of attire. Likely enough there was not accommodation for all, and some delegates preferred to rest at night by their camp fires under "the myriad stars that shine overhead, in this clear atmosphere, with a brilliancy beyond belief."

Presiding officer Branch T. Archer, in his opening address, said that the Texans had attempted the work of "laying the cornerstone of liberty in the great Mexican Republic," and then a committee of twelve was appointed to draw up a "Declaration of the People of Texas in General

Convention Assembled." As originally worded, the declaration must have been too extreme to please a majority of the delegates, for it provoked a debate over the question whether the consultation should come right out for independence or merely declare "in defense of the republican principles" of the federal constitution of 1824.

Houston had written in October, "Our principles are to support the Constitution and *down with the usurper!*" — meaning, of course, Santa Anna. He now offered a resolution instructing the committee to declare in favor of the constitution. J. H. Wharton, brother of William H. Wharton, was chairman of the committee, and he so stubbornly opposed Houston's resolution that Houston withdrew it. The Whartons were radicals of the most pronounced type. Again were Houston's insight and observation vindicated; for when it came to a vote, thirty-three were in favor of declaring for the constitution and only fifteen in favor of declaring for out-and-out independence. So that much was settled.

The texts of such declarations define for us, as clearly as we may hope to have it defined, the attitude of the people who issue them. This document of the Texans is vigorously put, but

considerably milder than we might logically suppose it would have been. There is about it so much of fairness and prudence that one feels that Mexico should have met it with measures of compromise and conciliation. The Mexican "liberals," however, were not then strong enough to rid themselves of the "Napoleon of the West"; and with him in power the Texans could expect nothing but blind efforts toward coercion. This is how the Texas declaration reads: —

"Whereas General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna and other military chieftains have, by force of arms, overthrown the federal institutions of Mexico and dissolved the social compact which existed between Texas and the other members of the Mexican Confederacy; now the good people of Texas, availing themselves of their natural rights, solemnly declare

1. That they have taken up arms in defense of their rights and liberties, which were threatened by the encroachments of military despots, and in defense of the Republican Principles of the Federal Constitution of Mexico of eighteen hundred and twenty-four.

2. That Texas is no longer, morally or civilly, bound by the Compact of Union; yet, stimulated

by the generosity and sympathy common to a free people, they offer their support and assistance to such members of the Mexican Confederacy as will take up arms against military despotism.

3. That they do not acknowledge that the present authorities of the nominal Mexican Republic have the right to govern within the limits of Texas.

4. That they will not cease to carry on war against the said authorities, while their troops are within the limits of Texas.

5. That they hold it to be their right, during the disorganization of the Federal System and the reign of despotism, to withdraw from the Union, to establish an independent Government, or to adopt such measures as they may deem best calculated to protect their rights and liberties, but that they will continue faithful to the Mexican Government so long as that nation is governed by the Constitution and laws that were formed for the government of the Political Association.

6. That Texas is responsible for the expenses of her armies now in the field.

7. That the public faith of Texas is pledged for the payment of any debts contracted by her agents.

8. That she will reward by donations in land

all who volunteer their services in her present struggle, and receive them as citizens.

These Declarations we solemnly avow to the world, and call God to witness their truth and sincerity; and invoke defeat and disgrace upon our heads, should we prove guilty of duplicity."

These are words of spirit, are they not? Not much room there, either, for quibble or discussion. It is odd that men who could express their sentiments so directly and forcibly could not act with a similar directness and force when it came to putting those sentiments into practice. Yet such was the case.

When they organized a provisional government, they planned something that couldn't possibly work, and that, when it was tried, not only didn't work but set everybody by the ears just when united action was needed. They provided for two branches — the civil and the military. The civil branch was composed of, first, a council consisting of one member from each municipality. These municipalities were subdivisions of the departments, and comprised "a village, hamlets, and a considerable area of land." Each municipality sent its delegates to the consultation — for example, Sam Houston was a delegate from Na-

cogdoches. The delegates from each municipality elected one member of council for that particular municipality. The function of this council was chiefly legislative, but also, to some extent, advisory and even appointive.

Secondly, the civil branch included a governor and lieutenant governor, elected by the consultation. A stout radical, Henry Smith, with whom Houston was in sympathy, was chosen governor and James W. Robinson lieutenant governor.

Then there was the military branch, which was to consist of a regular army of 1120 men — to serve for two years (or the war) — and a force of militia composed of all the other able-bodied Texans. The regulars were to be commanded by an officer with rank of major general, who was also to act as commander in chief of all forces that might be in service during the war. He was to be appointed by the consultation, but commissioned by the governor; and, as if to make as much confusion and conflict as possible, he was to be subject to the orders of both the council and the governor. Sam Houston was chosen.

The consultation adjourned before it had provided any way out of the difficulty, should there be a deadlock between governor and council; but

not before it had delicately supplied one more factor of possible discord and danger by stipulating that the provisional government was to have no authority over the volunteers before San Antonio. Fortunately, the volunteers solved this problem, as we have seen, by disbanding themselves and ceasing, as an army, to exist. The consultation, its labors over, adjourned to meet March 1 of the next year, unless earlier summoned by governor and council.

In 1845 Houston spoke at a barbecue near Nashville, whose people were once more proud to welcome him. He told his friends there that an appeal to arms had been made by the Texans in self-defense only. "To the principles of our provisional government of 1835, by which we pledged our fortunes and our sacred honor to the maintenance of the Constitution of 1824, we had adhered," he said, "with a tenacity little short of religious devotion." A trained soldier, he approached reluctantly that last resort of war.

CHAPTER X

Confused Councils

Houston set quickly and sensibly to work. He drew up a plan for the organization of the Texan forces; he appointed his staff; he urged upon council and governor the need for vigorous action. Governor and council were preoccupied with their own squabbles, sometimes rather amusing but always out of place. Houston wanted to get certain necessary measures passed, so that he could start recruiting and at least have the regular army organized at once. He was certain that sooner or later Santa Anna would take up the case of Texas in real earnest, and send an invading force much larger than the Texans had yet had to meet.

Although by nature headstrong and impetuous, he not only waited with patience, but did all he could to calm others who were beginning to criticize and denounce the government. Some of these disgruntled persons held a mass-meeting at

San Felipe. Mosely Baker offered a violent set of "resolutions," and made a fiery speech in their defense. He wanted a new and more energetic government.

Houston, the story goes, was permitted to speak. The consultation, he said, existed by the will of the people of Texas; to put an end to it would be equal to handing Texas over to anarchy, and hence would be nothing less than criminal. Pointing a finger at Mosely Baker, he cried, "I had rather be a slave and grovel in the dust all my life than be a convicted felon!" So powerful was the effect he created that the mass-meeting broke up, and Mosely Baker quietly destroyed the manuscript of his precious resolutions. Again and again Houston, by his wonderful gift of persuasion, swayed popular assemblies.

At last the government took the necessary action. Houston's headquarters were at a hamlet named Washington, some fifty miles up the Brazos from San Felipe. There he issued a proclamation.

To all enlisting in the regulars for two years (or during the war), he offered twenty-four dollars bounty and eight hundred acres of land. "Provision has also been made," he announced, "for raising an auxiliary volunteer corps to constitute

part of the army of Texas, which will be placed under the command and subject to the orders of the commander in chief. The field for promotion will be open. The terms of service will be various. To those who tender their services for or during the war will be given a bounty of six hundred and forty acres of land; an equal bounty will be given to those who volunteer their services for two years; if for one year a bounty of three hundred and twenty acres. . . . The services of five thousand volunteers will be accepted. The first of March next, we must meet the enemy with an army worthy of our cause, and which will reflect honor upon freemen. Our habitations must be defended; the sanctity of our hearths and homes must be preserved from pollution. Liberal Mexicans will unite with us. Our countrymen in the field have presented an example worthy of imitation. Generous and brave hearts from a land of freedom have joined our standard before Bexar. They have by their heroism and valor called forth the admiration of their companions in arms, and reflected honor on the land of their birth. Let the brave rally to our standard."

This was a ringing call to arms such as Sam Houston well knew how to pen. But the quarrel

between governor and council was going merrily on, with each giving orders and each trying to assert a superior authority. The governor was calling the council "scoundrels," "Judases," and "parricides," and the council was describing the governor's language as "low, blackguardly, and vindictive." This wrangle simply blocked the wheels. The Texans had begun splendidly with the capture of Bexar, but now Houston was handicapped. He sided with Governor Smith in the dispute, because he believed the governor was right; the council was rather carried away by the idea of coöperating with the Mexicans, whereas the governor wanted independence for Texas and thought it could best be reached by keeping clear of any alliance with the Mexican "liberals." One of the early historians of that period sums up the quarrel by saying that "The council was guilty of usurpation, and the governor of great impudence."

There were certain spirits who were determined to invade Mexico. They wanted to capture Matamoros, a town in the state of Tamaulipas, on the south bank of the Rio Grande, about twenty-eight miles from the river's mouth. Just why, they probably couldn't have explained if they

had been asked. There was a Doctor James Grant, a Scotsman, who had been driven from his fine estate in Coahuila; and there was Colonel Frank W. Johnson, who had been left at the Alamo — these men were quite intent on this vain expedition.

The council, as if resolved to show how absurd it could be, commissioned two men to lead the Matamoros venture — Johnson and one J. W. Fannin. Fannin seems also to have delighted in the title of "colonel." Indeed, so commonly does one encounter military honors among the Texans of that day that one feels like Martin Chuzzlewit when he "found that there were no fewer than four majors present, two colonels, one general, and a captain, so that he could not help thinking how strongly officered the American militia must be; and wondering very much whether the officers commanded each other; or if they did not, where on earth the privates came from."

Fannin and Johnson both proceeded to call for volunteers, each on his own account and both ignoring Houston. Houston, under orders from the governor, had directed our old friend Colonel Bowie to take charge of the expedition. The governor was so far influenced by the popular

clamor that he evidently thought it policy to take some action. But Bowie did nothing; possibly he did not receive Houston's instructions. The governor therefore ordered Houston himself to the frontier.

Lieutenant Colonel Neill, now in command at Bexar, reported to Houston that the volunteers who had left that place to join the Matamoros enterprise had thoughtfully taken with them all supplies on hand and left the garrison in actual want. Houston forwarded this report to the governor, and with it he sent a letter of his own.

He has no word of complaint against the governor; he does not protest because his authority has been flouted by the council and he has been virtually superseded. He is thoroughly indignant, though, at the pettiness and short-sightedness which he knows menace his plans and hopes. Here is the letter, written from his headquarters at Washington, Texas, January 6, 1836:—

"*Sir*, — I have the honor to inclose to your excellency the report of Lieutenant Colonel J. E. Neill of the artillery; and most respectfully request that you will render to the cause of Texas and humanity the justice of bestowing upon it your serious attention, and referring it to the

General Council of the provisional government in secret session. There, I may be permitted to hope, you will attend in person, that all the essential functionaries of the government may deliberate and adopt some course that will redeem our country from a state of deplorable anarchy. Manly and bold decision alone can save us from ruin. I only require orders and they shall be obeyed. If the government now yields to the unholy dictation of speculators and marauders upon human rights, it were better that we had yielded to the despotism of a single man, whose ambition might have been *satisfied* by our unconditional submission to his authority, and a pronouncement, for which we are asked, in favor of his power.

"In the present instance the people of Texas have not even been consulted. The brave men who have been wounded in the battles of Texas, and the sick from exposure in her cause, without blankets or supplies, are left neglected in her hospitals; while the needful stores and supplies are diverted from them, without authority and by self-created officers, who do not acknowledge the only government known to Texas and the world.

"Within thirty hours I shall set out for the army, and repair there with all possible dispatch.

I pray that a confidential dispatch may meet me at Goliad, and, if I have left, that it may pursue me wherever I may be.

"No language can express my anguish of soul. Oh, save our poor country! — send supplies to the wounded, the naked, the sick, and the hungry, for God's sake! What will the world think of the authorities of Texas? Prompt, decided, and honest independence is all that can save them and redeem the country. I do not fear, — I will do my duty!"

Neill was appealing for reënforcements at Bexar, so Houston sent Bowie, always dependable, with just a few men. At the same time he instructed Neill to demolish the fortifications at Bexar and bring away the artillery. The state of the army's equipment, however, is shown by the fact that Neill couldn't remove the guns because he had no teams. So Bexar continued to be occupied. The valiant Travis reappeared upon the scene, sent by Governor Smith. When Neill left for home, Travis claimed command of the regular troops and of the volunteer cavalry; Colonel Bowie had to content himself with commanding the remainder of the volunteers.

While Houston was at Refugio, the last of the Spanish mission-posts established on Texan soil,

he was chosen a delegate from that place to the new convention to meet at Washington on March 1. He also made a speech to Johnson's volunteers, most of whom, under the spell of his eloquent good sense, straightway gave up the Matamoros notion and joined Houston's own troops; luckily, for nearly all of the few men left in Johnson's detachment were not long after killed by the Mexicans, and so were the greater number of Grant's party. Fannin marched to Goliad. There he, in his fortress, like Travis in his at Bexar, waited the onset of the Mexicans, who were fatally drawing near.

So the Matamoros expedition fizzled out; and such was the state of things in these lone outposts, when Houston went eastward to conclude a treaty with the Indians. The "consultation" had adopted a "solemn declaration" regarding the Indians of eastern Texas. These Indians, Cherokees and fractions of other tribes from the United States, were not friendly to the Texans, who had made frequent encroachments upon their lands.

The "declaration" was in Houston's own handwriting and it certainly shows his influence, as, for example, at the close, where it reads: "We solemnly declare that they are entitled to our

commiseration and protection, as the first owners of the soil, as an unfortunate race of people, that we wish to hold as friends and treat with justice." Houston and another commissioner now summoned a grand council at the village of Chief Bowles of the Cherokees, and a treaty was entered into that had the good result of causing the Indians to remain peaceable. This was but one more instance of Sam Houston's practical judgment, and one more service that he rendered in paving the way for a free and independent Texas.

There is a sequel not wholly creditable to the whites. The senate of the Republic of Texas afterwards, when the danger was over, refused to confirm the treaty. In 1839, when Mirabeau B. Lamar was president, the Cherokees were ordered out of the country; and when they naturally declined to go, they were driven out by an armed force. Chief Bowles was killed, and about a hundred more of the Indians were slain or wounded. At the time this happened, Sam Houston was absent from Texas. We shall later see what he thought about it.

CHAPTER XI

A Famous Retreat

Ere we shake ourselves free of this coil of politics, we shall have to glance at the convention of 1836. It met on March 1 and was in session seventeen industrious and unquiet days. On March 2 — the "Independence Day" of Texas — it adopted a declaration of independence of Mexico, whose government it held guilty of a goodly list of high crimes and misdemeanors.

It framed a constitution derived in most features from that of the United States but modified to fit a single independent state. A provisional president (David G. Burnet) and vice president (Lorenzo de Zavala, a Mexican) were elected by the convention; and a little cabinet was formed, consisting of an attorney-general and secretaries of state, the treasury, the navy, and war. On March 4, the convention appointed Sam Houston commander in chief of all Texan troops — regu-

lar, militia, and volunteer. Until a president could be chosen by the people, Houston was to be under the general direction of the provisional government.

Though there was every reason for immediate action, the convention was strangely adjourned on March 4, not to meet again until the 7th. Every day came vague rumors of large and determined columns of advancing Mexicans. From Gonzales eastward the Anglo-American settlements were alarmed. On February 24, Travis had sent forth from the Alamo that wonderful letter "To the People of Texas and all Americans in the world." "If this call is neglected," he had written, "I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country."

Neglected the call was, so far as provisional president or councils or conventions had to do with it. Thirty-two men from Gonzales showed how easy relief would have been by making their way through the Mexican leaguer. This casual aid was all that reached the doomed garrison. Like Chinese Gordon and his men at Khartum, Travis and his men at the Alamo looked out with

ever-waning hope across the battlements and went to their death as the last great chance of their perilous and daring lives. In the very shadow of that death, Travis wrote, ". . . Our flag still waves proudly from the walls. *I shall never surrender or retreat.*"

Of that immortal garrison of the Alamo not a man was left. A sergeant of the Mexicans afterwards told of the defense in these simple words: "Our lifeless soldiers covered the ground. . . . They were heaped inside the fortress. . . . The wounds were generally in the neck or shoulders, seldom below that." They had fallen — the desperate Bowie, the whimsical Crockett, and others of less renown — but the score was three to one. Like the "*longue carabine*" of Natty Bumpo, their rifles had spoken to some purpose. To greater purpose, indeed, than they knew. For "Remember the Alamo!" became the watchword of Texan vengeance.

On Sunday, March 6, the day the Alamo fell, the convention hastily assembled, and the members listened to the reading of Travis's letter of March 3, his last before the Mexican assault. "We have had," he told his government, "a shower of bombs and cannon balls continually

falling among us. . . ." The sound of that bombardment had been carried far across the silent prairies, but not so far as Washington. More and more one feels, as one reads the records, that until Sam Houston became president there was no real government.

When Houston had heard the letter of Travis's read, he made a brief, soldier-like speech. He thanked the convention; he touched in passing upon his former service and attitude as commander in chief. Then he left for Gonzales. Gonzales, we have noted, was on the eastern bank of the Guadalupe where the old San Antonio road crossed the river. A small force was there.

Not long after he left Washington, Houston sent orders to Fannin, who was at Goliad, to join him at Cibolo Creek, at the east of San Antonio. Houston intended to march with the combined forces to the relief of Travis. When he arrived at Gonzales, on March 11, a rumor was being spread that the Alamo had been taken. He then ordered Fannin to blow up the fortress at Goliad and fall back to Victoria, on the road from Goliad to San Felipe de Austin.

Houston found at Gonzales three hundred and seventy-four men — stout fighters all, but quite

undisciplined. Three women, two young children, and a boy had escaped slaughter at the Alamo. One of the women, a Mrs. Dickinson, made her way to Gonzales, and reaching there on the 13th, brought definite news. On the evening of that day Houston set fire to Gonzales and started on his famous retreat across Texas.

As for the ill-starred Fannin, he did not disobey orders, but he delayed, and the result was the same. He did not wish to start from Goliad before he had received word from two parties he had sent out — one under Captain King, to bring in families from the little post of Refugio; the other under Lieutenant Colonel Ward, to assist King. So he waited until the 19th; and then, although no tidings had reached him, he finally began his march.

His men, mostly volunteers from the United States, had gone but a few miles when, to their dismay, they found themselves neatly surrounded by Mexicans. Fannin kept up a show of defense until nightfall, but he gradually realized how really defenseless he was, and with the coming of the day on the 20th, he surrendered. Those of his men who contrived to escape, always claimed the understanding with the Mexican commander

was that they were to be regarded as prisoners of war. The "Napoleon of the West" thought otherwise.

On the evening of the 26th, they were still hopeful. One man even brought out his old flute and cheered his comrades with "Home, Sweet Home."

On the 27th, Palm Sunday, they were led, three hundred and seventy-one of them, past the Mexican women who murmured "Poor fellows!" — out upon the prairie and there shot down like dogs. Twenty-seven fled into the long grass and were not caught. Fannin handed his watch to the officer in command of the firing squad, asking that he might not be shot in the head and might have decent burial. Small favors these, but overmuch for Mexican courtesy. He was shot in the head, and his body was cast in a heap with the others. As at the Alamo, the dead were piled with brushwood and burned. That was Santa Anna's way.

In his fine little volume, "Great Senators," Oliver Dyer, once a reporter in the United States Senate, says: "It is not probable that any one in these days feels, or could feel, such an interest in General Houston as people, and especially young men, felt in him forty years ago. The tragic circumstances which attended the struggle of Texas

for her independence were then fresh in our memories. My heart leaps now and my blood grows hot as I recall the time, in April, 1836, when the news of the terrible fight in the Alamo, at San Antonio de Bexar, first came to the sequestered village of Lockport, N. Y., where I lived, then a boy just coming twelve years old. I wept over the fate of the three heroic colonels — Travis, Crockett and Bowie. . . .

" . . . When four or five weeks afterwards, news came of the massacre of Colonel Fannin and his men at Goliad, . . . the whole community was aroused to madness. Public meetings were held and fiery resolutions were passed. . . ."

If such were the feelings in a far-away corner of New York State, if there a twelve-year-old boy could be so moved, what, think you, was the effect in Texas of the stories of the Alamo's fall and the butchery at Goliad? The effect was two-fold.

First, all settlements west of the Trinity were frantic with terror. Under any conditions the approach of the foe brings dread to communities which the call of war has emptied of able-bodied defenders. We may imagine how, in this case, that dread was greatly intensified by the details brought by survivors of Santa Anna's deliberate

and barbarous cruelties — cruelties such that even Mexican officers protested against them. Second, Houston's army thirsted for vengeance and was wild to fight, anywhere, anyhow, if only it might wreak that vengeance upon an enemy for which it felt a contemptuous hatred. So eager were these men for battle, so concerned for the safety of families and friends, so inexperienced in warfare, so restless, that no better tribute could be found to Sam Houston's genius for leadership than the fact that, keeping to himself his plan of campaign, he held his retreating army together so well.

Houston might have risked a battle sooner than he did. The probable result would have been the concentration of all the Mexican forces in Texas, and another battle against great odds. Instead, Houston allowed the overconfident Santa Anna to distribute his troops through the country in widely severed divisions. When at last he had the division under Santa Anna's personal command at a disadvantage, he moved with a swiftness and a confidence that showed he had prudently schemed for a decisive victory.

A glance at a map of Texas will make plain that one of the marked physical features of the country is the number of rivers flowing from northwest

to southeast and emptying into the Gulf of Mexico. These rivers in themselves form an excellent series of natural barriers against invasion. Houston planned to fall back across them, one after another, even if he had to go beyond the Sabine. From Gonzales, which was the most westerly outpost of Anglo-American civilization and about sixty miles east of San Antonio, he started on a retreat that, amid continual complaint, he pursued for almost six weeks.

From Gonzales to the Colorado River, his army grew, until at one time it probably was not far from 1500 strong. From the Colorado eastward it dwindled, and only about 800 men were left to fight the battle of San Jacinto. Not long before the battle he wrote to a friend at Nacogdoches; "From time to time I have looked for reinforcements in vain. . . . Texas could have started at least 4000 men. . . . It is wisdom growing out of necessity to meet the enemy now. Every consideration enforces it. No previous occasion would justify it."

In 1776, Washington was retreating up the Hudson and across New Jersey with an army of but 3000 — unpaid, raggedly clad, wretchedly armed, and half-starved. Good patriots shook

their heads sadly and doubted if he could escape. At last he turned, recrossed the Delaware, and with the loss of scarce a man, won the joyous victory of Trenton on Christmas night. Houston's retreat suggests many a point of similarity. His men received nothing from their government for their services; he himself had, when he started, two hundred dollars for incidental expenses of his own and the army's. Their clothing was nondescript and unmilitary; Houston's own attention to dress had for the time vanished — he wore, they say, an old white hat, a black coat of equal age, and shabby boots. His one emblem of authority seems to have been a sword of little value, hitched to his belt by strips of buckskin. His only baggage was a pair of saddle-bags holding official documents and fresh linen. Houston's men had no real military equipment. They furnished their own rifles. For their two little six-pounder cannon they broke up scrap iron and horseshoes as ammunition. The army was guiltless of any such thing as a supply department. Sometimes the men were so lucky as to encounter a few head of stray cattle, and then they feasted. With a few exceptions, there were no tents, even for the officers.

From his government Houston received no practical aid, but considerable meddling and fault-finding. After he left the Colorado, the rank and file were unruly and mutinous. They dropped out by scores, until the army was only about half the size it had been. Those that stuck were the kind of saving remnant that, by the process of selection, had been made the fittest to endure and to win. When Houston was ready, his retreat became an advance, and the battle of San Jacinto was won in not more than half an hour.

Amid the panic that spread over the face of Texas the army moved on its difficult way. The season was uncommonly rainy; the streams had risen, and the trail across the prairie was in many places little more than a slough. The wagons sank to the hubs in the miry track.

Houston was always prompt, if need was, to lend his shoulder to a muddy wheel. Indeed, he was the quickening spirit of the march and the camp. By his jokes and ready humor, by scolding and imploring, he kept the retreat active. He seemed able to manage everything. People living in cabins far from his line of march were notified and taken along. Once he sent a guard thirty miles for the blind widow and six children of a

defender of the Alamo. On another occasion, when he was crossing the Colorado, he found two women sitting on a log by the bank. The husband of one of them had also fallen at the Alamo, and the poor soul had been left absolutely penniless and with no means of conveyance. Houston promptly handed her fifty dollars from his scanty funds. He never saw her again, but it is pleasant to know that years later, when Texas had been admitted to the United States, she wrote Houston a grateful letter in which she informed him that she had invested the fifty dollars in cattle, and by cattle raising had made herself independently well-to-do.

Houston issued to the army a proclamation in which, calling the men "fellow-soldiers," he said: "There are none to aid us. There is here but a small force, and yet it is all that Texas has. . . . There are but few of us, and if we fall, the fate of Texas is sealed. For this reason, and until I feel able to meet the enemy in battle, I shall retreat."

He wrote constantly to Rusk, the secretary of war for the provisional government. Here are extracts from some of those letters. They show how beset and tried he was; and they also show, very plainly, that the government had done noth-

ing for him. As a matter of fact it did actual harm by fleeing, when there was no necessity for doing so, from Washington, upon the Brazos River, to Harrisburg, some eighty miles nearer the coast. This certainly did not tend to check the panic among the Texans, and it encouraged the "Napoleon of the West," who had learned no caution from his experience at the Alamo. There is no evidence that Houston's reports and appeals to Rusk gained from that official the least bit of practical aid.

". . . For forty-eight hours," Houston writes, "I have not eaten an ounce, nor have I slept. I was in constant apprehension of a rout; a constant panic existed in the lines, yet I managed so well, or such was my good luck, that not a gun was fired in or near the camp, or on the march (except to kill beef) from the Guadalupe to the Colorado." (March 23.)

"I am writing in the open air," he says again, "I have no tent, and am not looking for the luxuries of life. . . . We must act now, and with great promptness. The country must be saved." (March 24.)

"On my arrival on the Brazos, had I consulted the wishes of all, I should have been like the ass

between two stacks of hay. Many wished me to go below, others above. I consulted none. I held no councils of war. If I err, the blame is mine." (March 29.)

Houston reached Burnham's Crossing on the Colorado, near the site of the present town of Lagrange, on March 17. After a two-day halt, he marched down the east bank of the river to Beason's Ford, which was not far from where the present town of Columbus is located. There he stayed until March 26. The Mexican General Sesma, with not much more than seven hundred men, came up and went into camp on the west bank, but Houston did not disturb him.

Various reasons have been given for this. Some say that it was because he was waiting for news of Fannin, which he did not receive until March 25, through a refugee from Goliad. Others suggest that he underestimated the fighting spirit of his men. He scarcely could have underrated their spirit, although he may not have been altogether convinced of their military effectiveness when brought face to face with Mexican regulars. Perhaps it would be nearer probability to say that, in his opportunity at Beason's Ford, Houston saw no reason for abandoning his prearranged scheme

of campaign. On March 26 he started toward the Brazos.

When the army had reached San Felipe de Austin, on the west bank of the Brazos, Captain Mosely Baker, the same person whom Houston had silenced in the mass-meeting, declined to go farther with his company. He was left to guard the crossing at that point and distinguished himself by burning the town, under the impression that the enemy was close at hand. The supposed enemy proved, however, to be nothing more dangerous than a herd of cattle. Captain Wily Martin, with his company, caught Baker's cowardly spirit, and also refused to continue with the retreat. Detailed to guard the crossing at Fort Bend, farther down the river, he appears to have offered no particular resistance to Santa Anna, who, in personal command of Sesma's division, passed over and moved at a smart pace toward Harrisburg. The Mexican commander hoped to break the backbone of such a foolish armed resistance by the capture of President Burnet and the Texan cabinet.

As for Houston, still keeping his plans to himself, he went up the river about one day's march, to what was known as Groce's, not far from the modern town of Hempstead. For two weeks he

remained there, endeavoring to use the time in instilling, as well as he might, much-needed system and discipline into his untrained and impatient legion. President Burnet wrote a severe letter to him; and it was decided at a meeting of the fugitive cabinet that the situation called for the presence in the field of the secretary of war. Rusk, it was thought, was the man to bring on a battle.

Santa Anna crossed the Brazos on April 13. On the very same day Houston issued a stirring and reassuring proclamation to the terrified inhabitants of eastern Texas. "You will now be told," he said, "that the enemy have crossed the Brazos, and that Texas is conquered. Reflect, reason with yourselves, and you cannot believe a part of it. The enemy have crossed the Brazos, but they are treading the soil on which they are to be conquered." On the 14th he was once more under way along the distressful roads. He had gone but a few miles when it was evident that he was bound toward Harrisburg. Now he could at least be censured no longer for retreating. He was quietly confident. The hour for which he had been waiting was about to strike.

CHAPTER XII

At San Jacinto

The 18th found Houston at Harrisburg — or where Harrisburg had been; for Santa Anna had set fire to it and little remained but ruins. President and cabinet had decamped just in time to New Washington on the shore of Galveston Bay. At Harrisburg Houston left the sick and non-effectives under a guard of seventy-five. Somewhere between two and three hundred men were thus detached from the main column. Captain Baker had ceased pouting and returned to the fold after the Brazos had been crossed, but all told, less than eight hundred men were available for battle.

In these days of large figures, when the world has become used to reading of great "drives" and mass movements in warfare, eight hundred may not seem a very impressive force. It is well to remember, however, that the important battles

of the world have not always depended on the mere brutal weight of numbers. At Concord, that 19th of April, 1775, only about five hundred minute-men gathered near "the rude bridge that arched the flood" and "fired the shot heard round the world."

Houston had a conference with Secretary Rusk. "We need not talk," was his comment. "You think we ought to fight, and I think so, too." Rusk attempted a speech to the men, but made abrupt end of it. The army continued wearily but doggedly along the Buffalo Bayou toward the San Jacinto River.

Santa Anna had gone on to New Washington, in the hope of seizing the government; but its members succeeded in making their escape to Galveston Island. He, therefore, started back, and on the morning of April 20 came in sight of Houston's Texans. Those Texans must have had a quick realization of the prudence and common sense of their commander, now that they saw for themselves how neatly the "Napoleon of the West" was bottled up.

The Texans were in a bend or curve of the bayou. The Mexicans were south of them, with nothing to fall back upon save the salt marshes where the

San Jacinto entered Galveston Bay. Between, lay the level prairie, now lush with grasses after the long rain. Just in the rear of Houston's men was a grove of live-oaks, with great tufts of Spanish moss hanging from the branches; and beyond that was the muddy bayou. A little way out on the prairie were a couple of "mottes" or clumps of trees. Santa Anna had succeeded in getting himself into such a position that the only way out was in front. The older military writers used to call a trap of this kind a *cul-de-sac*, which is French for "the bottom of a bag."

The "Napoleon of the West" had not read very carefully in the great Napoleon's book of war. To begin with, he had followed Houston across Texas in a straggling kind of way and had been getting all the time farther and farther from his base or source of supplies. Next, he had allowed himself to be crowded down into the bottom of this bag. Now he pitched his camp so foolishly that his own officers talked of it among themselves. When he realized that the vengeful Texans were confronting him, he seems to have lost his head. He built a slight barricade of saddles, baggage, and tree branches, and waited for something to happen. Yet when it did happen he was not ready.

On the 20th there was a skirmish in which one Texan was fatally wounded. That night Houston's men turned in under double guard, but the enemy remained peaceful. Throughout the night Houston was awake and alert, but with the morning he dozed for an hour or two, his head resting on a coil of rope. Early on the 21st General Cos, with some four hundred troops, joined the Mexicans; but four hundred more meant little to the rangers who, when it came to fighting Spanish-Americans, thought nothing of giving odds. It has sometimes been claimed that the battle of San Jacinto was fought by Americans temporarily in Texas for the sole purpose of defeating Mexico. For this statement there is no good ground, since it has been conclusively shown that at least ninety-eight per cent of Houston's men either were already residents of Texas, or remained there after the battle. Two volunteers from Cincinnati, however, did take a more or less conspicuous and audible part. They were two brass cannon, christened "The Twin Sisters." These had been presented by Cincinnati sympathizers with the Texan cause, and they were all the artillery Houston had.

At noon a council of war was held. Secretary Rusk, who had come expressly to urge Houston

into giving battle, now said that it was an unheard-of thing for raw troops to attack veteran soldiers; that a charge across open prairie without bayonets was equally unheard-of; and finally that the Texans were in a strong position and, if they stayed in it, could "whip all Mexico." Houston, through the officers, assured himself that the men were eager to fight at once; and at half past three he gave orders to fall in for the onset.

Under cover of one of the mottes, the troops were formed. As they assembled, a drum and fife, their only field music, played "Come to the Bower," an old-time tune. On the extreme right was Lamar (afterwards president of the republic), with the cavalry; next to him, with the two cannon, was Colonel Hockley, one of Houston's staff, and described by him as "a sage counsellor and true friend." The center was commanded by Colonel Edward Burleson, who had received the surrender of San Antonio de Bexar; the left by Colonel Sherman. Houston was with the center.

At four o'clock he gave the order, "*Forward!*" The men moved quickly, their pace gradually increasing to a run.

In the Mexican camp no one was looking for an attack at so late an hour. Arms were stacked.

Troopers were riding their unsaddled horses to water. Quite off their guard, swarthy figures were busied here and there; some with making shelters of boughs, others with cooking over little open fires; one with this duty, another with that. Even more off their guard, many were stretched out asleep. In his tent the "Napoleon of the West," reassured, was taking his siesta or afternoon nap. Perhaps the cruel adventurer "in dreams his song of triumph heard," and ordered another massacre. *Quien sabe?* Who knows?

There were no war correspondents with that Texan army, to describe for us the scene. We must reconstruct it for ourselves.

We see those determined Texans trotting in an uneven line, through the afternoon sun, over the stretch of wild prairie, their rifles held at trail. We see the "Twin Sisters" jolting on, supported by four companies of infantry. We see Houston, the battered white hat in his hand, spurring his horse along the ranks. We hear him shouting caution to the men.

Now they are drawing close to Santa Anna's flimsy barricade. Suddenly, it seems from nowhere, on a horse spattered with mud and streaked with foam, up dashes a gypsy-looking rider. They

know the black hair, the dark eyes, the imbrowned face. It is Erastus Smith — "Deaf" Smith they call him, whom his infirmity does not keep from being the chief of all Texan scouts.

"I have cut down Vince's bridge!" he yells. "Now fight for your lives!"

At that a great, hoarse cry arose. By Houston's orders the bridge across Vince's Bayou, a small stream running at their rear into the Buffalo Bayou, had been destroyed. They had marched over this bridge to reach the battle-ground, and now it, and with it the only practicable exit, was gone. It was one of those timely, vivid strokes that Houston could so skillfully manage. It had an instant effect.

"Remember the Alamo! Remember the Alamo!" shrilled the rangers, to each other and to the confused and frightened Mexicans. The "Twin Sisters" were wheeled about and fired at close range at the barricade. But the Texans were too impetuous to dally much with artillery. They swarmed irresistibly through the Mexican defenses.

Mexican officers roared frantic commands at their unheeding men. Springing from his tent, Santa Anna vainly cried out to them to lie down.

From a photograph by George Beach.

THE SITE OF VINCE'S BRIDGE

The monument at the right of the picture marks the spot where stood the rude structure that "Deaf" Smith cut down, as ordered by Sam Houston.

"It's no use! It's no use!" they cried back. They fired one desperate, haphazard volley. Then the Texans were upon them.

Two of Santa Anna's officers gave good account of themselves that day. One was General Castrillon of the artillery, whose heart had led him ineffectually to plead with Santa Anna for the lives of a few prisoners taken at the Alamo. His men would not face the grim Texans, and he was shot dead early in the action. The other officer was Colonel Almonte, a very intelligent fellow, afterward minister to the United States.

As for the "Napoleon of the West," his ferocity was tamed indeed. He wrung his hands. He ran distractedly about. He madly gave orders. "I believe they will shoot us all!" he exclaimed. Then he flung himself upon a horse, and led a pell-mell flight.

No flight, however, could avail the Mexicans now. With bowie knives or the butts of their rifles, the yelling Texans struck them down in hand-to-hand combat. If they broke from the mêlée and ran, they were shot as they floundered in the bogs at the rear of their camp; or they were overtaken by a foe at once fleet and unsparing.

Houston's horse was several times hit. He

himself was struck in the ankle by a rifle ball which shattered the bone and caused him much pain. Still he kept in the saddle. After the Mexican flight had begun, he tried to restrain his men, but he very well knew how idle was such an attempt.

Why, there was his trusted "Deaf" Smith, wariest and most resourceful of scouts, charging ahead of the Texan infantry, flinging discretion to the prairie winds. Smith's horse falls, and he comes a cropper. Like a flash he is on his feet. He levels his pistol at a Mexican who is threatening to skewer him with a bayonet. The cap on the pistol misses fire. He throws the treacherous weapon full in the face of the dazed Mexican, tears the musket from the man's grasp, and lays about with it like a demon.

Look where he might over that quickly won field, Houston could see an equal zeal. "Me no Alamo!" protested the Mexicans at the top of their lungs as they begged for mercy. "Me no Alamo!" Houston's good horse sank at last beneath him. With a splintered ankle, Houston could not walk. He was carried back to the camp.

Less than fifty of the Mexicans escaped. On behalf of his commander in chief, Colonel Almonte made a formal surrender. Thirteen hundred and

sixty Mexicans were killed, wounded, or captured. The Texan casualties were but two killed and twenty-three wounded.

Among the spoils of war were horses, mules, clothing, arms, baggage, and twelve thousand dollars in silver. Of none of these did the scrupulous Houston take any share.

The prisoners were not roughly treated, but they were ridiculed unmercifully. The Texans paraded about in noisy procession, carrying lighted candles taken from the equipage of the enemy. Bonfires shone through the night. "Santa Anna? Santa Anna?" the Texans mocked the Mexican officers, until some of them, thinking to evade their tormentors, tore off their shoulder straps. With such festivities and rude horseplay the victors of San Jacinto made merry.

"See! Just above th' horizon's farthest edge
A lone star rises in the gloomy night;
Dimly and tremblingly its rays are seen,
Shining through cloud rifts or concealed from sight;
Faintly it glimmers o'er the Alamo;
Redly it gleams above Jacinto's field;
Higher it rises — now, brave hearts, rejoice —
'Tis fixed in beauty on heaven's azure shield."

CHAPTER XIII

An Important Capture

Meanwhile, the "Napoleon of the West" had disappeared. He sped toward Vince's Bayou, only to find the bridge down. In he plunged. His horse sank into the mud and stuck there. Santa Anna abandoned the animal, swam the stream, and went on afoot. By chance he found in a deserted house some old clothes, not altogether in keeping with the proud estate of a Dictator.

When he came forth, he was a queer, fugitive figure in slippers of red worsted, linen trousers, a blue cotton blouse, and a leather cap. To the search parties that scattered to look for Santa Anna and others, Houston had said they would find the runaway chieftain, if they found him at all, "making his retreat on all fours, and he will be dressed as bad, at least, as a common soldier." "Examine closely every man you find," were Houston's instructions.

The next day, as he was making his footsore way through mire and heavy grass toward the Brazos "bottoms," Lieutenant Sylvester and a small party came upon him. He dropped in the grass, but too late to escape detection. To Sylvester he denied that he was an officer, but the lieutenant had caught sight of a fine cambric shirt beneath the cotton jacket. He was taken up on horseback behind one of the men, and brought as quickly as possible to Houston.

Houston had been kept awake all night by the pain in his wounded ankle. He now lay on a rude, improvised couch, presumably in the open air, with none of the comforts needed by a man in his condition. After his vigil, he had fallen into a drowse.

In the camp about him, the Texans, like big boys at play, went on with their pranks, tying ribbons and officers' sashes on the captured mules, and rummaging through the plunder.

All of a sudden it is noised about that Santa Anna has been captured — that, indeed, he is here. The little Napoleon appears. He makes a low bow. "I am General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna," he says, "President of the Mexican Republic, and I claim to be your prisoner of war."

Houston motions to him to be seated on a box — the only seat visible in the whole camp. Then he sends for Colonel Almonte, to act as interpreter, while Santa Anna takes a seat on the box, his eyes roaming distrustfully about. "El Presidente!" (the President) goes the word from mouth to mouth among the Mexicans.

As soon as Almonte arrived, the interview began. Santa Anna must by this time have been quite at his ease, for he directed the following statement at Houston, who throughout was courteous but positive: "That man may consider himself born to no common destiny who has conquered the Napoleon of the West; and it now remains for him to be generous to the vanquished."

"You should have remembered that at the Alamo," tersely returned Houston. Even after such a flattering allusion to his destiny, he did not intend to let Santa Anna claim mercy as if by special right.

Then Santa Anna pleaded that at the Alamo he was justified by "the usages of war." "Such usages," answered Houston, "among civilized nations have yielded to the influences of humanity."

Santa Anna pretended that he had orders from his government commanding him to exterminate

From a photograph by Schlueter.

THE SPOT WHERE SANTA ANNA WAS CAPTURED.

The monument on the left commemorates the event. On the staff at the right, the "Lone Star" flag may be seen flying beneath the Stars-and-Stripes.

every man found bearing arms in Texas, and to treat all such as freebooters. "Why, *you* are the government of Mexico," Houston flung back.

When Houston mentioned Goliad, Santa Anna declared that he had been told by General Urrea that Fannin surrendered "at discretion" — that is, without any understanding whatever. He had not known, he said, of any understanding that the Texans were to be treated as prisoners of war. He blustered, too, about making Urrea pay some day for the deception.

By all this Houston was not at all impressed. He had no respect for, or confidence in, Santa Anna. But he believed that, as he afterwards wrote to Rusk, "Texas, to be respected, must be considerate, politic, and just in her actions." Some violent and unthinking spirits were for disposing of Santa Anna, there and then; but that night the Mexican commander slept in a tent well guarded.

President Burnet and his cabinet now hastened back to enjoy the fruits of Houston's triumph. Santa Anna was quite ready, in exchange for his life, to agree to almost any conditions. The terms finally arranged were substantially those first suggested by Houston in a memorandum to Secretary Rusk.

Rusk now relieved Houston of the command of the army, and Houston started for New Orleans to have his wound properly cared for. Before he left, he addressed a farewell to the men.

". . . You have encountered odds of two to one of the enemy against you, and borne yourselves, in the onset and conflict of battle, in a manner unknown in the annals of modern warfare. While an enemy to your independence remains in Texas the work is incomplete; but when liberty is firmly established by your patience and your valor, it will be fame enough to say, 'I was a member of the army of San Jacinto!'

"In taking leave of my brave comrades in arms I cannot suppress the expression of that pride which I so justly feel in having had the honor to command them in person. . . . At parting, my heart embraces you with gratitude and affection."

Then he sailed for New Orleans, which he reached after a slow voyage. Throngs waited on the levee to see him land. He was taken to the home of his friend William Christy, and there was attended by Dr. James Kerr, the same surgeon who had treated him for the wound received at Horseshoe Bend. More than twenty pieces of bone were removed, but his recovery was complete.

Santa Anna signed two treaties, one open and one secret. This was on May 14. Within a few days the Mexican forces had finally withdrawn beyond the Rio Grande.

The battle ground of San Jacinto was purchased by the State of Texas in 1906 for a memorial park. About fifteen miles northwestward, on Buffalo Bayou, is the flourishing city of Houston, which was laid out in 1836. There, on Caroline Street, lived at one time the man who made San Jacinto possible and for whom the city was named. In the eastern part of the State is Houston County, with Crockett (O rare combination!) for its county seat. At Huntsville, in Walker County, is the Sam Houston Normal Institute. In 1905 statues of Houston and Austin were accepted from Texas and placed in Statuary Hall of the Capitol at Washington. In that hall each State is entitled to statues of two of its distinguished citizens.

Thus Texas has sought to honor its liberator and leader. We have yet to see how he labored for Texas after Texas became free — a nation in area almost five times the size of England, a nation over which, as Daniel Webster said, a bird could not fly in a week, but a nation without organization or experience.

CHAPTER XIV

President of Texas

Houston's fame was now assured. In the United States Senate, Thomas H. Benton — "Old Bullion" Benton, as the public nicknamed him, — himself one of the picturesque figures of American history, spoke at some length in honor of the hero of San Jacinto.

". . . He was appointed an ensign in the army of the United States," said Benton, "during the late war with Great Britain, and served in the Creek campaign under the banners of Jackson. I was the lieutenant colonel of the regiment to which he belonged, and the first field officer to whom he reported. I then marked in him the same soldierly and gentlemanly qualities which have since distinguished his eventful career: frank, generous, brave; ready to do or to suffer whatever the obligations of civil or military duty imposed; and always prompt to answer the call

of honor, patriotism, and friendship. Sincerely do I rejoice in his victory. . . .

". . . He is the first self-made general since the time of Mark Antony and the King Antigonus, who has taken the general of the army and the head of the government captive in battle. Different from Antony, he has spared the life of his captive, though forfeited by every law, human and divine."

In Texas, the old complaints against Houston were forgotten as a great ground-swell of enthusiasm stirred the country. Henry Smith, the obstinate provisional president whom we have already met, and Stephen F. Austin, to whom Texas owed so much, were Houston's rivals for the presidency of the youngest and feeblest of republics. But, as against more than five thousand ballots for Houston, Smith had less than seven hundred and fifty, and Austin not six hundred.

Houston at once made Austin his secretary of state and Smith his secretary of the treasury. Of this generous act, one writer has said: "I hardly know another instance of such quiet strength." Houston himself put forth only this modest claim: ". . . I was firmly impressed with a belief that, if either of the gentlemen should

be elected, it would be next to impossible to organize and sustain a government. . . . Not being identified with either of the parties, I believed I would be enabled so to consolidate the influence of both, by harmonizing them, as to form an administration which would triumph over all the difficulties attendant upon the outset of the constitutional government of Texas."

Those were "pretty pinching times" for the new nation. It had very little wealth, except in land. Its resources were scant. Its trade was too small to yield much revenue from taxes. Finances were managed, probably, with as much care as they really could be; but Texas simply couldn't pay its debts or meet its expenses. At the end of Houston's first administration, the national debt totaled in the neighborhood of $2,000,000.

Houston's policy toward the Indians was what we have learned to expect from him. Unfortunately, in this policy Houston did not have proper support from Texas officials or from private citizens. People talked of "Houston's pet Indians," as if the governor's idea of justice and common sense toward the red man were just an amiable hobby. Besides this, the Mexicans, who

would not admit that Texas was free, kept up such feeble and foolish hostility as they could; and they were constantly trying to arouse the Indians against the Texans.

Although Mexico had, generally speaking, all she could attend to at home, yet the Texans were not ready to ignore the possibility of another Mexican invasion. So an army was maintained for a while. This army was largely made up not of Texan settlers, for most of these had returned to their homes after San Jacinto; but of volunteers from the United States — an unruly crowd who compelled their commander, General Lamar, to retire and tried to run things at their own sweet will.

Houston took a shrewd step to rid himself and Texas of this disorderly element. He gave about three fourths of them a furlough until needed. Then he showed his excellent judgment of men by appointing Albert Sidney Johnston to command the remainder. Johnston had three horses shot under him at Monterey, in the Mexican War, and as a general in the Confederate service was killed in the battle of Shiloh. He had great military talent. Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States, said after Johnston's death:

"Without doing injustice to the living, it may safely be said that our loss is irreparable." Houston was probably the first to recognize Johnston's distinguished ability as a military leader.

Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar followed Houston as president; for the constitution provided that no one could be president for two successive terms. He was an honest and patriotic man, Lamar; able, too, in his way; and at San Jacinto he had shown bravery. He had a brother who became associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, and who reveled in the name of Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar. Mirabeau Buonaparte, in his political theories, was just about as "highfalutin'" as his name might suggest.

He believed in an aggressive, nagging policy toward the Indians; a great navy; a hostile attitude toward Mexico, and a generally showy style of government. For the fiscal year ending September 30, 1839, expenses were more than $900,000, while receipts were less than $188,000. By the close of Lamar's administration the national debt was nearly $7,500,000.

Lamar was responsible for a costly expedition to capture Santa Fe, New Mexico. It had been said — probably with truth — that the people

of New Mexico would very gladly be united with Texas. The expedition ended in utter disaster, and the members of it were captured.

When, in 1841, Houston again came into office, he said, in his first message: "We are not only without money but without credit, and for want of punctuality, without character. . . . Patriotism, industry, and enterprise are now our only resources, apart from our public domain and the precarious revenues of the country." By severe and drastic economy throughout his second term, he succeeded in properly organizing the finances.

To his "venerated friend" Jackson, who in 1837 had signed the bill recognizing Texan independence, he wrote thus: ". . . I entertain confidence in the speedy success of Texas if I am sustained in carrying out a wise policy, to live within our means, act defensively, cultivate our rich land, raise a revenue from import duties, make and keep peace with the Indians, and, if possible, get peace with Mexico, in the meantime watch her, be prepared, and if an army invades us, never to let them return."

In every way Houston showed his level head. He chuckled as he vetoed measure after measure put forward by a fantastic congress. When the

United States decided not to annex Texas, he promoted cordial relations with Great Britain, provoking the jealousy of the United States toward any foreign nation that might attempt to gain such a foothold in North America. It is reported that later he thus explained his position. "Suppose," he said, "a charming lady has two suitors. One of them, she is inclined to believe, would make the better husband, but is a little slow to make interesting propositions. Don't you think, if she were a skillful practitioner at Cupid's court, she would pretend that she loved the other 'feller' best and be sure that her favorite would know it? If ladies are justified in making use of coquetry in securing their annexation to good and agreeable husbands, you must excuse me for making use of the same means to annex Texas to the United States."

The capitol was established at Austin, moved to Houston, then to Washington, and then back to Austin. While it was at Washington, a British tourist, by chance of similar name, Mrs. M. H. Houstoun, visited the place and saw the congress in session. Her account is almost as satirical as Mrs. Trollope's description of a visit to the capitol at Washington, D. C.

". . . While public business was under discussion," says Mrs. Houstoun, "the honourable members of Congress were to be seen seated on candle boxes and sugar casks; in short, on anything they could find; and each man was whittling away without intermission.

"A piece of wood is placed before each senator, who, were it not for this necessary precaution, would very soon, in common with his honourable friends, cut the table to pieces. No sooner is a member seated, than he takes out his knife, and never leaves off cutting away, whether speaking or silent."

For President Houston himself she is quite outspoken in praise. "Without using any undue means to make himself popular," she remarks, "the President is courteous and polite to persons of all ranks; and, though I believe a Tory at heart, makes no difference in his civility of manner, to any parties or factions."

Houston's farewell address dwelt on the matter of annexation and expressed his real feelings regarding it. "The attitude of Texas now," he said, "in my apprehension, is one of peculiar interest. The United States have spurned her twice already. Let her, therefore, maintain her

position firmly, as it is, and work out her own political salvation. . . . If Texas goes begging again for admission into the United States, she will only degrade herself. They will spurn her again from their threshold, and other nations will look upon her with unmingled pity. . . . If the United States shall open the door and ask her to come into the great family of States, you will then have other conductors, better than myself, to lead you into a union with the beloved land from which we have sprung — the land of the broad stripes and bright stars."

So far as we can now judge, Houston at first feared that Texas was not strong enough to continue independent, but in course of time he more or less modified that opinion. Probably his personal choice would always have been in favor of independence. In 1843 he wrote in a private letter: "It is not selfishness in me to say that I desire to see Texas occupy an independent position among the nations of the earth, to which she is justly entitled by her enterprise, daring, sufferings, and privations." Doubtless it is true, too, that he would have been glad to be ranked in history as the founder of a new state — among those to whom Lord Bacon assigned first place

in his "marshaling of the degrees of sovereign honor." The British *chargé*, in his dispatches to his government, in which we should certainly suppose him to give his actual opinion, represented Houston as incorruptible, with no "small desire for office" or "smaller greed for money" but having "a grand ambition to associate his name with a nation's rise."

Of course all the Texans did not agree with Houston in everything. But this did not deter him a bit. When Sam Houston laid down his office in 1844, some few professed to be suspicious of him, and here and there might have been found a petty dislike or local grudge. In the main, however, none disputed his influence or his position of power.

It must have required a man with a vision to see then what Houston apparently saw in the future of Texas. At that period Galveston, the only seaport worthy of notice, where practically all of Texas commerce was centered and whence practically all of the national revenue came, was described as made up of about three hundred structures that "a bold person would or might call houses." The town boasted but one brick chimney. The buildings were raised about two feet

on blocks, to keep them out of the universal ooze, through which, untroubled save by dogs, pigs wandered hither and yon.

In December, 1844, Houston was succeeded by Anson Jones, described to us as "a person of medium height, medium weight, and medium intellect" and "a well-meaning, good-hearted individual of much common sense." On March 1, 1845, President Tyler signed the bill for the annexation of Texas. In June of the same year, Andrew Jackson, Houston's friend and pattern of a statesman, died at "The Hermitage," his country estate near Nashville, Tennessee. The government of the Republic of Texas continued until early in 1846. In that year began the Mexican War, which was one of the results of annexation.

The western boundary was in dispute. Texas declared that the boundary line was at the Rio Grande; Mexico, that it was at the Nueces River. This would lessen the size of the new state considerably. President Polk accepted, for the United States, the limits set by Texas for itself. Furthermore, the Mexican congress had announced that annexation would be regarded as equivalent to a declaration of war, and had later severed diplomatic relations with the United States.

On April 23, the Mexicans crossed the Rio Grande and shed the first blood — on soil that they claimed, but which was referred to in Tyler's message as "our own territory." Abraham Lincoln, who was then in Congress, demanded, in a set of resolutions that came to be called the "Spot Resolutions," where the precise "spot" of the bloodshed was; and inquired if the bloodshed had not been brought on by the action of the United States in sending troops thither. General Grant, many years afterwards, said, in his "Personal Memoirs" (1885–86), that the American troops were sent "apparently in order to force Mexico to initiate war."

When Texas had resigned nationality and, as no other State had ever done, had entered directly into the Union, Sam Houston once more became an American citizen. In 1846, he was elected to the United States Senate, with Rusk as his colleague, and in March took his seat in the Twenty-ninth Congress. A marked figure, he remained in the Senate for two terms. Oliver Dyer, the lad from Lockport, N. Y., when a reporter in the Senate, "was not without apprehension" as he "first approached General Houston and looked him over."

"It was easy," Dyer tells us, "to believe in his

heroism, and to imagine him leading a heady fight, and dealing destruction on his foes. . . . He was large of frame, of stately carriage and dignified demeanor, and had a lionlike countenance. . . . His dress was peculiar, but it was becoming to his style. The conspicuous features of it were a military cap and a short military cloak of fine blue broadcloth, with a blood-red lining. Afterwards I occasionally met him when he wore a vast and picturesque sombrero and a Mexican blanket — a sort of ornamented bedquilt, with a slit in the middle, through which the wearer's head is thrust. . . ."

Houston's "principal employment in the Senate," Dyer goes on to say, "was whittling pine sticks. I used to wonder where he got his pine lumber, but never fathomed the mystery. He would sit and whittle away, and at the same time keep up a muttering of discontent at the long-winded speakers. . . ." Another writer claims that Houston's material was cypress shingles. Whatever it may have been, it appears generally agreed that he was a tireless whittler.

His voice was heard in behalf of his "pet Indians." "I am a friend of the Indian," he said in one of his speeches, "upon the principle that I

am a friend to justice. We are not bound to make them promises; but if a promise be made to an Indian, it ought to be regarded as sacredly as if it were made to a white man."

He deplored the lack of attention paid to the welfare of the Indian, when missionaries were being plentifully sent to foreign parts. "Is not the soul of an American Indian, in the prairie," he asked, "worth as much as the soul of a man on the Ganges or in Jerusalem?"

He was opposed to Senator Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Bill, cutting the Territory of Nebraska into two parts, of which the southern was named Kansas, and leaving it to the settlers of the two new territories whether or not they should have slave labor. Rusk was in favor of the bill, and Houston's opposition to it cost him, for the time being, his political popularity in Texas.

Three thousand clergymen in New England presented a petition against the bill. Douglas burst forth into abuse of the petition and of those who had presented it. He called the clergymen desecrators of the pulpit and the petition a calumny and a falsehood — doubtless with the great voice and high-wrought gestures that characterized him. Houston was not personally in sympathy with

the general opinions of the petitioners, but he took the furious wind out of Douglas's sails by replying, with his usual trenchant common sense: "Ministers have a right to remonstrate. They are like other men. Because they are ministers of the Gospel, they are not disfranchised of political rights and privileges."

Houston's whole course while he was in the Senate was conservative as contrasted with the extreme or radical faction in the South. It is stated that he and John Bell, who was a senator from Houston's old State of Tennessee, were the only senators from southern states who voted against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. In the bill for the establishing of government in the Territory of Oregon, he supported the provision that prevented slavery in that Territory. Calhoun and Butler, the two senators from South Carolina, interposed; but what they thought, or what the whole South might think, mattered little to Houston.

"*Disunion*," he said on the floor of the Senate, "has been proclaimed in this hall. What a delightful commentary on the freedom of our institutions and the forbearance of the public mind when a man is permitted to go unscathed and

unscourged who, in a deliberative body like this, has made such a declaration!"

Houston was as courageous and independent as ever, but he was also, in a certain way, mellower and milder. For example, we find him humorously observing: "I have not the pleasure of seeing in his seat at this moment my friend, the Senator from South Carolina [Butler], but we have had, on several occasions, little spats on the floor, always awakening some new and pleasant emotion in my heart toward him. Sometimes he is a little sharp and razorish in his remarks; but still I like him." It is safe to say that the earlier Houston would not have been likely to refer with so jocular an air to a political opponent.

In 1840 Houston had married a Miss Margaret M. Lea of Alabama; and it was probably due in part to her influence that he became a member of the Baptist Church. While in Washington he used to be seen in his pew, apparently absorbed in whittling out little toys with his jackknife. He must all the time, however, have been paying close attention to the sermons, for he was fond of giving outlines of them in the letters he wrote home on Sunday afternoons.

In one way and another Houston's name was

more than once mentioned in connection with the Presidency, but nothing ever came of it. Once, in a Senate speech of 1855, he said: "When the Senator from Iowa supposes that I would cater for the Presidency of the United States, he does me great injustice. I would not cater for any office beneath Heaven. But, sir, I know one thing: if it were to be forced upon me, I should make a great many changes in some small matters."

In 1857 Houston was a candidate for the governorship of Texas on an independent ticket, but he was defeated by H. R. Runnels, candidate of the Democratic party. This was the only time that Houston was ever defeated by the vote of the people of Texas. He did not take a very vigorous interest in the campaign, and he dismissed the result lightly. With a touch of that increasing good humor that we have already noted, he said to the Senate: "It had been insisted upon that Texas could not get along without my services; but they have demonstrated to me that they *can* get along without my services, and I am exceedingly glad of it, because it shows their increasing prosperity."

Not for long, however, did Texas try to do without the services of its chief citizen. In 1859

Houston defeated Runnels. It was a triumph both for him and for the sane principles he defended. But the election of Lincoln hurried on secession. Houston tried to hold Texas back. . . . "He might have accomplished," says a Texas authority, "anything less than the impossible; but this was the task, in fact, that he had now set himself, and it is no wonder that he failed."

A few days before the presidential election of 1860, Houston spoke from the balcony of the Tremont House in Galveston. His friends asked him not to speak, as they were afraid the mob might attempt violence. He waved them aside, and standing there "in the presence of a crowd to whom few others could safely have spoken as he did," uttered these solemn words of prophecy and warning: —

"Some of you laugh to scorn the idea of bloodshed as a result of secession, and jocularly propose to drink all the blood that will ever flow in consequence of it! But let me tell you what is coming on the heels of secession. The time will come when your fathers and husbands, your sons and brothers, will be herded together like sheep and cattle at the point of the bayonet, and your mothers and wives, and sisters and daughters, will ask, Where are

they? You may, after the sacrifice of countless millions of treasure and hundreds of thousands of precious lives, as a bare possibility, win Southern independence, if God be not against you, but I doubt it. I tell you that, while I believe with you in the doctrine of State rights, the North is determined to preserve this Union."

A group of political leaders had issued, in defiance of Houston, a call for a convention to meet on January 28, 1861. The convention met, adjourned after a brief session, reassembled, and on March 4 counted the Texan vote — a little over 13,000 against secession; more than 44,000 in favor of it. On that very day Lincoln, in his inaugural speech, was saying: "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists:" but also declaring that he would do his utmost to keep his oath to "preserve, protect, and defend" the Union.

Houston was thereupon summoned to appear before the convention on March 16 and take a new oath of office, in which he must swear allegiance to the Confederate States of America. He absolutely refused, and asserted that after the vote on secession had been taken, the convention no longer had a right to exist. Then the convention

declared the governorship vacant, and instructed one Edward Clark, the lieutenant governor, who had ridden into office "on the tail of Houston's coat," to assume the functions of governor until the next election could be held.

". . . I shall make no endeavor," said Houston, "to maintain my authority as chief executive of the State, except by the peaceful exercise of my functions. When I can no longer do this, I shall calmly withdraw from the scene. . . ."

So while the convention was calling upon him to come forward and take the oath, he sat in his office, whittling a pine stick; "not that he loved Texas less, but that he loved Texas more as a State of the old Union than as a State of the new Confederacy." One morning he found that Clark had reached the governor's room before him. Thereupon he retired to Huntsville, glad at heart, no doubt, to quit public life forever.

A northern man, who was in Texas from 1861 to 1866, tells a story that shows Houston, even in his latest years, had lost none of his gift for dramatic popular appeal. Colonel Moore had organized a fine volunteer regiment, eleven hundred strong, and he invited Houston to review it. On the appointed day, there was Houston, in his old rude service

uniform, — the cheap sword at his side, the battered hat on his head, — a figure out of that other Texas that was but a quarter-century distant and yet that seemed so very far away.

The large crowd rustled and stood on tiptoe. Many were choking back the tears.

Colonel Moore requested Houston to take command. The remainder of the story is here given in the words of the original account.

"'Shoulder arms.'

"'Right about face.' The regiment now facing to the rear, the General cried out in stentorian tones of sarcasm: 'Do you see anything of Judge Campbell or Williamson S. Oldham here?'

"'No,' was the emphatic reply. [Oldham and Campbell had been strong opponents of Houston on the secession question.]

"'Well,' said the General, 'they are not found at the front nor even at the rear.'

"'Right about, front face.'

"'Eyes right. Do you see anything of Judge Campbell's son here?'

"'No, he has gone to Paris to school,' responded the regiment.

"'Eyes left. Do you see anything of young Sam Houston here?'

"'Yes,' was the thrilling response. [Young Sam was a member of the regiment.]

"'Eyes front. Do you see anything of old Sam Houston here?' By this time the climax of excitement was reached, and the regiment and citizens responded in thunder tones, 'Yes!' and then united in a triple round of three times three and a tiger for the old hero."

Houston's last speech was delivered on March 18, 1863, in the city named for him. "As I behold this large assemblage, who from their homes and daily toil have come to greet once again the man who so often has known their kindness and affection, I can feel that even yet I hold a place in their high regard. This manifestation is the highest compliment that can be paid to the citizen and patriot."

On July 26, 1863, three weeks after 37,000 starving prisoners of war had surrendered at Vicksburg, Sam Houston, having fulfilled the allotted threescore and ten, quietly passed away.

CHAPTER XV

Houston the Man

As we have followed Sam Houston through his varied and adventureful career, we have, let us hope, gained some impression of the kind of man he was. Perhaps a few further glimpses of him will serve to make that impression yet clearer and more intimate.

When Houston's statue was accepted for Statuary Hall by the House of Representatives, a member from Tennessee said: "Having seen Houston while I was a boy, I feel constrained to say that the marble statue of him we are this day accepting, while probably picturing him in his youth, does not do full justice to the magnificent physique he possessed when in after days he became the hero of two nations. Houston was a man of majestic proportions, and wherever he went never failed to impress all beholders with the conviction that he was one of the giants of the earth."

When he delivered his notable speech at Galveston, just before Texas went with the Confederacy, "he stood," wrote one who heard him, ". . . where every eye could scan his magnificent form, six feet and three inches high, straight as an arrow, with deep-set and penetrating eyes looking out from heavy and thundering eyebrows, a high, open forehead, with something of the infinite intellectual shadowed there, crowned with white locks . . ., and a voice of the deep basso tone, which shook and commanded the soul of the hearer; added to all this a powerful manner, made up of deliberation, self-possession, and restrained majesty of action, leaving the hearer impressed with the feeling that more of his power was hidden than revealed."

"He was," a member of his family has stated, "regular in his habits and plain in his tastes, except in the matter of his dress, which was much commented on, but which had at least the merit of originality. For instance, he often wore, when in Washington, a vest of tiger-skin. . . . Instead of his overcoat, he would sometimes wear a dark-brown blanket with stripes of a lighter shade, thrown around his shoulders. A light-gray, broad-brimmed hat of felt or beaver was the only hat I

remember seeing him wear. His style of dress could not make him look ridiculous, nor did it detract from the commanding air which belonged to him."

In manner, Houston was very much, and very genuinely, "of the old school." To women particularly, of whatever relative station, he was most polite and gracious, and his politeness was true politeness of the heart. "It was a matter of common jocose remark that if 'Old Sam Jacinto' [Houston's nickname] should ever become President, he would have a cabinet of women."

He had a considerable vein of humor, which appeared frequently in his private speech, less often in his public address. When he chose, he could, even into his formal utterances, introduce a pointed anecdote that would serve to drive home a moral.

Thus, he told the story of a rural justice who was sitting in a case. After having heard testimony for the plaintiff, the justice ordered court adjourned. "Oh, stop, stop, Squire," cried out some one, "you're not going?" "Yes," returned this local Shallow, "I have heard enough." "But you have heard only half the case." "Yes," agreed the justice, "but to hear both sides of a case always confuses me."

Again, he told of a boy who had been sent to

mill in the days when millers took toll — that is, took part of the grain as their pay for doing the grinding. The miller of this particular mill had the reputation, as the boy knew, of being none too honest in taking toll. He got into conversation with the boy, and began to question him.

"What is your father's name?" he asked. "I don't know," said the boy. "Well," said the miller, "where is he from?" "I don't know," answered the boy. "Why," said the miller, "you know nothing." "Yes," replied the boy, "some things I know and some things I don't know." "Well," queried the miller, "what is it you do know?" The boy answered, "I do know that the miller's hogs are very fat." "And what," persisted the miller, "is it that you don't know?" And the boy responded, "I do not know whose corn fattens them." So, Houston said, he knew the senator from Delaware had certain information, but he did not know who had given it.

On occasion Houston could express himself with epigrammatic pungency. A man on whom he had bestowed various small State and Federal offices turned against him when the secession issue was raised, and spoke abusively of him. Some one mentioned this to Houston and censured the

man for his course. "You musn't be hard on him," is said to have been Houston's comment. "I was always fond of dogs, and he has all the virtues of a dog except his fidelity." It is also reported that he remarked of Jefferson Davis, "I know Jeff Davis well. He is as ambitious as Lucifer and as cold as a lizard."

Some of his "talks" to the Indians are quite remarkable for knowledge of Indian character and rather fine in literary style. Here is a specimen, written from Washington, Texas, during his second term as president: —

To the Lipans, in Memory of Flaco, their Chief.

Executive Department,
Washington, March 28, 1843.

My Brother: —

My heart is sad! A dark cloud rests upon your nation. Grief has sounded in your camp. The voice of Flaco is silent. His words are not heard in council. The chief is no more. His life has fled to the Great Spirit. His eyes are closed. His heart no longer leaps at the sight of the buffalo. The voices of your camp are no longer heard to cry: "Flaco has returned from the chase!" Your chiefs look down on the earth and groan in

trouble. Your warriors weep. The loud voices of grief are heard from your women and children. The song of birds is silent. The ears of your people hear no pleasant sound. Sorrow whispers in the winds. The noise of the tempest passes. It is not heard. Your hearts are heavy.

The name of Flaco brought joy to all hearts. Joy was on every face. Your people were happy. Flaco is no longer seen in the fight. His voice is no longer heard in battle. The enemy no longer make a path for his glory. His valor is no longer a guard for your people. The might of your nation is broken. Flaco was a friend to his white brothers. They will not forget him. They will remember the red warrior. His father will not be forgotten. We will be kind to the Lipans. Grass shall not grow in the path between us. Let your wise men give the council of peace. Let your young men walk in the white path. The gray-headed men of your nation will teach wisdom. I will hold my red brothers by the hand.

Thy brother,

Sam Houston.

It is easy to see how thoroughly Houston has caught the Indian mode of thought and the Indian style of expression.

Sometimes, when he wished to be specially emphatic in conversation, he would speak of himself in the third person; as, for example, "I have come to leave Houston's last words with you," or "Houston will take the stump," and so on.

He did not know what fear was. His independence aroused strong personal dislikes, especially among the rougher element; but if conscious of the dislike of any one class, he never showed it. At the town of Houston, not long after his retirement, he spoke, in spite of threats, on the war between the States, and told his hearers that, cut off as it was from the rest of the world, the South could not finally escape defeat. When we consider what popular feeling in Texas then was, we must admire the absolute courage of the old leader. Though he had been deposed from office and attacked by his enemies, he walked the streets, we are told, as if he had been the real victor in the contest.

Yet even as he would not, years before, see Texas ignored by the United States when she offered herself to the Union, so now he would not see her coerced when she chose to leave that Union. If the Union could be peacefully preserved, well and good; if not, he would remain with his State. In this spirit he declined Lin-

coln's offer to make him a major-general in the Union army. Though personally an ambitious man, he then and on many other occasions sacrificed ambition to principle.

We know that he gained the confidence of Indian tribes; we know how great was his influence in the pioneer world of Texas. It is also interesting to note what an impression he made upon the cultured and fastidious Charles Sumner. In a letter to John Bigelow (February 3, 1852), Sumner wrote: "I am won very much by Houston's conversation. . . . He is really against Slavery; and has no prejudices against Free Soilers. In other respects he is candid, liberal and honorable. I have been astonished to find myself so much of his inclining."

"General Houston," says Judge John H. Reagan in his "Memoirs," "was one of Nature's great men — great in intellect, great in action, great in his wonderful experiences. A stranger would have taken him in any company for a ruler of men." So we leave the backwoods boy who became "statesman, soldier, orator, 'the liberator of Texas,' than whom good Sir Walter himself never drew a more fascinating, a more romantic, or a braver, figure."

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